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A HISTORY OF ONEONTA.







**DUDLEY M. CAMPBELL,**

From portrait taken on porch of Daniel Webster's home, Marshfield, Mass.

# A History of Oneonta

New York

*FROM ITS EARLIEST SETTLEMENT*

*TO THE PRESENT TIME.*



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BY

DUDLEY M. CAMPBELL.

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ONEONTA, N. Y.

G. W. FAIRCHILD & CO.

1906

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## CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	11
CHAPTER I—The Town's Earliest History..	15
CHAPTER II—Early Settlers in Oneonta.....	29
CHAPTER III—Prominent Men of the Town...	45
CHAPTER IV—Pioneer Experiences.....	53
CHAPTER V—The Township Organized.....	79
CHAPTER VI—Newspapers and Schools.....	93
CHAPTER VII—Stories of the Older Inhabitants	101
CHAPTER VIII—Early Settlers Outside the Village	109
CHAPTER IX—Religious Organizations in One- onta.....	115
CHAPTER X—Oneonta Sixty Years Ago and Now.....	123

### *APPENDIX.*

Oneonta in 1841.....	131
The Town's Military Record.....	135
Excerpts from "Oneonta Memories"—	
The Railroad Celebration in 1865.....	141
Leading Citizens in 1866.....	144
Public School Pupils in 1868.....	145

Historical Sketches from The Oneonta Herald—	
Uncle Jeremy and His Times.....	149
An Ancient Village Site.....	155
An Indian Mound.....	157
Recollections of Harvey Baker—	
An Historical Sketch of “Barn Hill”.....	162
The Oneonta Militia.....	169
The Site of the Baird Block.....	173
Supervisors of Oneonta.....	177
Oneonta Village Incorporation.....	178
Poems by Emily Bugbee Johnson—	
Going Home.....	185
The Vale of the Susquehanna.....	189



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Portrait of Author.....	<i>frontispiece</i>	
Oneonta in 1860.....	<i>fronting page</i>	16
The Old Bridge, 1885.....	“	32
Main Street, Looking East, 1870..	“	48
The Old Mill, 1885.....	“	64
Broad Street, 1873.....	“	80
Oneonta Normal School.....	“	96
Main Street, 1873.....	“	112
The State Armory.....	“	128
Walnut Street, 1870.....	“	144
Fox Memorial Hospital.....	“	160
Dietz Street, north of Walnut, 1870	“	176



## P R E F A C E

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**I**N preparing this work for publication the aim of the author has been to put in preservative form such information as has been gathered from private and public documents and from the tradition of the older inhabitants who were

“To the manor born,”

but who have passed away. In addition to a historical sketch published about twenty years ago, this work contains a large amount of new matter which has been gathered during the time that has elapsed since that publication. Among other additions this work contains various acts of the legislature regarding the town and affecting its interests, together with a complete list of the inhabitants who were known to be voters residing here in 1830—the date when the town was organized—and this list must be nearly a correct poll-list of the first town election held.

The work is brought down to the present time. It contains numerous illustrations showing landmarks in

the old village and in the new village as it now is. These illustrations, it is hoped, will help to emphasize the improvements that have marked the development of our town and village.

The author takes pleasure in acknowledging his obligations to Willard V. Huntington, John R. Skinner, Willard E. Yager, the late Harvey Baker, and others for valuable information and suggestions.

DUDLEY M. CAMPBELL,

Oneonta, N. Y.

December 15th, 1905.



CAMPBELL'S HISTORY OF ONEONTA.





# HISTORY OF ONEONTA

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE TOWN'S EARLIEST HISTORY.

THE territory comprised within the present boundaries of the town of Oneonta, previous to the war of the Revolution was little known except as the scene of many a sanguinary conflict between the different Indian tribes which contended with each other for its possession. The Delawares, whose home was on the river bearing their name, had been in peaceful possession of the upper Susquehanna valley from time immemorial; but long before the outbreak of hostilities between England and her trans-Atlantic colonies, the Tuscaroras, a warlike tribe from Virginia, wandered up the Susquehanna from Chesapeake Bay and laid claim to the upper portion of the valley as their hunting grounds. From that time, with brief and uncertain intervals of peace, up to the beginning of the Revolutionary struggle, the war between the contending tribes was waged with relentless fury.

Eventually the strife between these aboriginal tribes terminated in favor of the invaders, or Tuscaroras, who

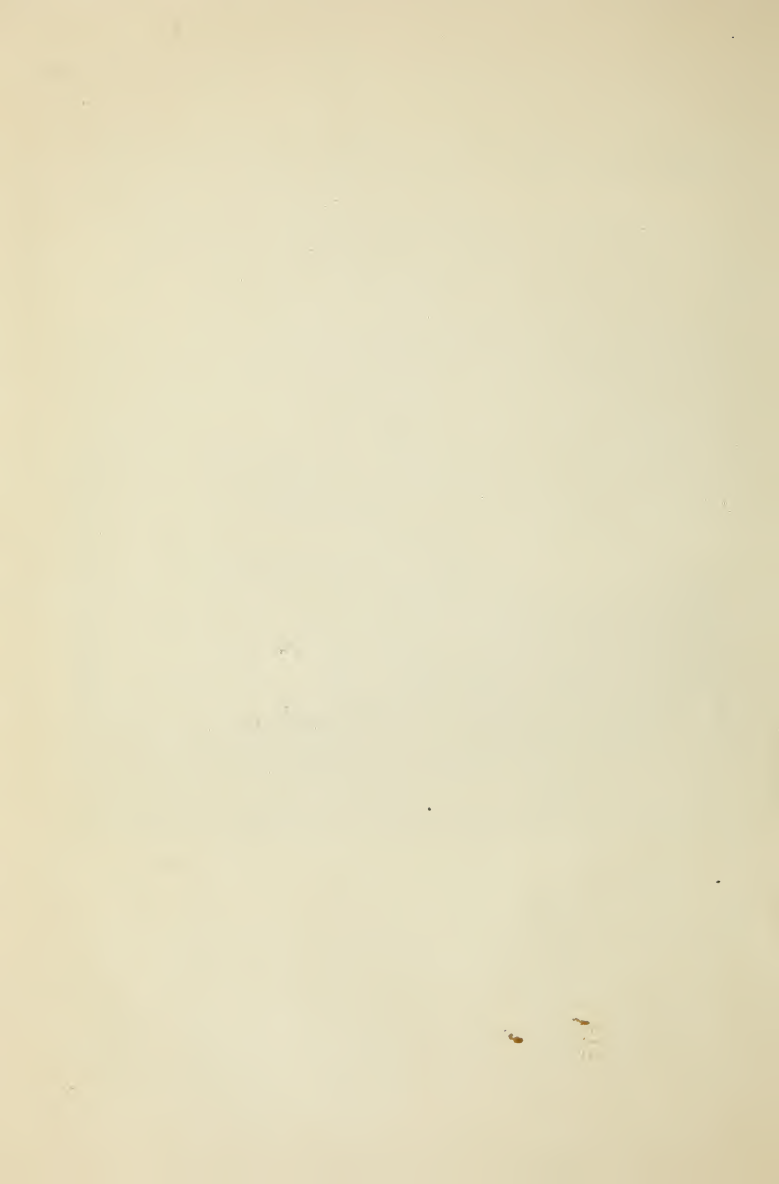
were soon thereafter allied to and became a part of the Six Nations, occupying the more northern and western portions of the state.

Large Indian settlements or villages were located within the boundaries of the town of Oneonta—one at the mouth of the Charlotte creek and another at the mouth of the Otego creek, the former known as Adaquatingie and the latter known as Ahtigua. Both of these villages appear to have been abandoned before our war of Independence, as the Rev. Mr. Hawley, a missionary from Stockbridge, Mass., who passed down the valley in 1754, makes no mention in his diary of Adaquatingie, but says his party camped over night at the mouth of the Ahtigua where there “had been” an Indian settlement.

A little more than a mile east of the line now established between Oneonta and Milford, at the confluence of the Susquehanna and Schenevus, there was also a large Indian village known as Tiondadon. The latter village is mentioned by Mr. Hawley as occupied by the aborigines in 1754.

In 1779 General Clinton’s army passed down the valley from Otsego lake to join General Sullivan’s forces to the westward. On their march they laid waste the rude hamlets wherever any Indian habitations remained. The tradition has been handed down, that when Clinton’s dam was built for the purpose of raising the water of the lake in order that the army luggage might be borne down on a flood-tide, the Indians were terrified





at the diminution of the water, supposing it to be the work of the Great Spirit, and sped from the valley.

General Clinton's passage through the valley was aided by means of batteaux which carried the luggage while the main army followed the well-worn trail that led down the river to the westward. An encampment was made for one night, according to a diary kept by one of the officers, at VanDerwerker's mill. This VanDerwerker built the first grist mill that was erected in the town. It stood southeasterly fifty rods from the Oneonta Milling Company's building. Near this old mill site the trail crossed the river some distance north of the iron bridge now spanning the Susquehanna at the lower end of Main street. Vestiges of the old mill dam were pointed out to me many years ago by my grandfather, Dr. Joseph Lindsay.

After the passage of the army to the westward, the Susquehanna valley ceased to be the permanent abiding place of the red men. A few scattered representatives of the once proud Tuscaroras and Oneidas built their temporary wigwams where convenience suggested, and derived such subsistence as the forest and stream afforded till their removal to Oneida, but they were no longer a terror to the settlers.

In the expeditions sent out to the southwestward from Albany, and likewise in the marauding expeditions of the savages against the frontier settlements along the Schoharie, the Susquehanna valley, wherein is situated

the village of Oneonta, became the common highway to both parties. The old Indian trail, it has been ascertained, from the Schoharie fort to the west, passed down the Schenevus creek to its mouth, there crossed the Susquehanna, and continued down the northwest side of the stream, passed through the village of Oneonta nearly along the line of Main street; thence crossing the river near the lower end of the village, it continued westward on the south side of the stream for some distance down the river, on toward the Chemung and the fort at Oswego. There was also another trail leading from Schoharie to Harpersfield and thence down the Charlotte creek to the Susquehanna.

"We had gone on about ten miles farther which brought us as low down as where Collier's bridge now crosses the river. Here we imagined that the Indians were possibly as cunning as ourselves, and would doubtless take the more obscure way and endeavor to meet us on the east side. On which account we waded the stream and struck into the woods crossing the Indian path, toward a place now called Craft-town." (Priest's Collection of Stories of the Revolution, published in 1836. "McKeon's Scouts in Otsego County.")

On the high ground, a little distance beyond the southern extremity of the Lower or Parish Bridge, there has been found within the past few years a large ring, which from the inscription traced upon it, is supposed to have belonged to one of Butler's Rangers. This ring is now



in the possession of Dr. Meigs Case, and bears upon its outer side these words and letters: Georgius Rex; B. R." It is supposed that the letters "B. R." are abbreviations for "Butler's Rangers." 4

In 1683 two Cayuga Indians gave the following geographical information to the justices of Albany regarding the valley. The quotation is from the Documentary History of New York, Vol. I, page 393, etc.:

"That it is one day's journey from the Mohawk Castles to the lake whence the Susquehanna river rises, and then ten days' journey from the river to the Susquehanna Castles—in all eleven days.

"One day and a half's journey by land from Oneida to the kill (Unadilla river), which falls into the Susquehanna river, and one day from the kill unto the Susquehanna river, and then seven days unto the Susquehanna Castle—in all nine and a half days' journey."

"The Indians demand wherefore such particular information relative to the Susquehanna river is sought after from them, and whether people are about to come there? The Indians are asked if it would be agreeable to them if folks should settle there? The Indians answer that they would be very glad if people came to settle there, as it is nigher than this place and more convenient to transport themselves and packs by water, inasmuch as they must bring everything hither on their backs. N. B.—The ascending of the Susquehanna river is one week longer than the descending."

In 1684 the Onondaga\* and Cayuga sachems made an oration before Lord Howard of Effingham at Albany, from which the following extracts are taken. I have preserved the original spelling:

"Wee have putt all our land and ourselves under the Protection of the great Duke of York, the brother of your great Sachim. We have given the Susquehanna River which we wonn with the sword to this Government and desire that it may be a branch of that great tree, Whose topp reaches to the Sunn, under whose branches we shall shelter our selves from the French, or any other people, and our fire burn in your houses and your

\*From a record of a meeting of the mayor and alderman of Albany in 1689 the Omondagas are called *Ti onon dages*.

In an old map found among the papers of Sir Guy Johnson the Schenevus creek or valley is called *Ti-ononda-don*. The prefix *Ti* appears to have been quite common among Indian names, sometimes used and sometimes omitted. Doubtless *Ononda* is the root of the word *Ti-ononda-don*. As the Onondagas has claimed the Susquehanna country, the Indian etymologist might naturally inquire whether there was any kinship between Tionondaga, Tionondadon, Onondaga, and the word Oneonta. This belief in a common etymon might be somewhat strengthened by a quotation from a "Journal of What Occurred between the French and Savages," kept during the year 1657-58. (See Doc. Hist., Vol. I. p. 44 :

"The word Ononta, which signifies in the Iroquois tongue, a *mountain*, has given the name to the village called Onnontae, or as others call it, Onnontague, because it is on a mountain."

Perhaps the word Oneonta may have been derived from Ononda. In all languages dentals are interchangeable, which would make Ononta the same as Ononda. Among the Hurons who had been conquered by the Iroquois, a tribe is mentioned under the name of *Ti-onnonta-tes*.

No reliance can be placed upon any particular spelling of Indian names as the Aborigines had no written language and the spelling was a matter of guess work from the pronunciation.



fire burns with us, and we desire that it always may be so, and will not that any of your Penn's people shall settle upon the Susquehanna River; for all our folks or soldiers are like Wolves in the Woods, as you Sachim of Virginia know, we having no other land to leave to our wives and Children."

In 1691 the governor and council of the province of New York sent an address to the king of England, from which the following extract is made:

"Albany lies upon the same river, etc. Its commerce extends itself far as the lakes of Canada and the Sinnekes Country in which is the Susquehanna River."

It appears that the ownership of the Susquehanna was the object of no little dispute among the tribes composing the Six Nations. The Onondagas claimed the country.

"At fifty miles from Albany the Land Carriage from the Mohawk's river to a lake from whence the Northern Branch of Susquehanna takes its rise, does not exceed fourteen miles. Goods may be carried from this lake in Battoes or flat-bottomed Vessels through Pennsylvania to Maryland and Virginia, the current of the river running everywhere easy without any cataract in all that large space."

The last quotation is from the report of the Surveyor General to the Lieutenant Governor in 1637.

The foregoing extracts appear to contain about all the information which the authorities at the colonial

capital could glean of the Indians concerning the Susquehanna country, as it was called.

The few scattered natives who remained here after the establishment of peace, were, in 1795, removed to the reservation in Oneida county, and became a part of the Indian tribes already settled there.

In volume III of the Documentary History of New York, a quaintly interesting letter of the Rev. Gideon Hawley may be found. The letter is interesting, because it may be safely regarded as the earliest authentic writing respecting this portion of the valley. Mr. Hawley was sent out as a missionary teacher to the Indians.

About this time a good deal of interest was being taken in the education of Indian youth. For the furtherance of this design, the Rev. Eleazur Wheelock established a school at New Lebanon, Conn., for the education of young whites and young Indians. This school afterwards ripened into Dartmouth college, and was removed to Hanover, New Hampshire. From this new-fledged seminary the Rev. Mr. Kirkland was sent among the Oneidas, and his labors in that quarter resulted many years afterwards in the founding of Hamilton college at Clinton. From a similar school established at Stockbridge, Mass., and which appears to have been favored by the influence and good will of the celebrated Jonathan Edwards, Mr. Hawley was sent to Oquaga on the Susquehanna.

Oquaga was the Indian settlement near the site of

the present village of Windsor in Broome county. Mr. Hawley's journey was from Albany up the Mohawk, across the mountains to Schoharie, thence along the valley to Schenecus creek and westward. As his letter, in the form of a journal, contains the earliest account that is known of the presence of white people within the present territorial limits of Oneonta, I hope the quotations I make from it may prove of some interest. The letter is dated July 31st, 1794. The first entry is as follows:

July 31st, 1794.

"It is forty years this date since I was ordained a missionary to the Indians, in the old South Meeting House, when the Rev. Dr. Sewall preached on the occasion and the Rev. Mr. Prince gave the charge. The Rev. Mr. Foxcroft and Dr. Chauncey of Cambridge, assisted upon the occasion, and Mr. Appleton. I entered upon this arduous business at Stockbridge, under the patronage of the Rev. Mr. Edwards. Was instructor of a few families of Iroquois, who came down from their country for the sake of christian knowledge and the schooling of their children. These families consisted of Mohawks, Oneidas and Tuscaroras. I was their school-master, and preached to them on the Lord's day. Mr. Edwards visited my school, catechised my scholars, and frequently delivered a discourse to the children."

This quotation may serve to show what kind of man

this early missionary was, and the deep interest then felt in the education and civilization of the aborigines. The formality with which the clerical harness was put on in the historic Old South Church, is strikingly in contrast with the way the missionary to the Indians is equipped now-a-days.

In the following quotations the dates are of the year 1753. May 22d of that year, a party consisting of Mr. Hawley, Mr. Woodbridge, a Mr. Ashley and Mrs. Ashley, set out from Stockbridge for Oquaga.

May 30th, 1753, a little more than a week after leaving Stockbridge, the party had its first view of the Susquehanna at Colliers. As the journal gives some description of our valley as it was then—about one hundred and fifty years ago—I quote freely:

“Our way was generally obstructed by fallen trees, old logs, miry places, pointed rocks, and entangled roots, which were not to be avoided. We were alternately on the ridge of a lofty mountain and in the depths of a valley. At best, our path was obscure and we needed guides to go before us. Night approaches, we halt and a fire is kindled; the kettles are filled and we refresh ourselves; and we adore Divine Providence, returning thanks for the salvations of the day and committing ourselves to God for the night, whose presence is equally in the recesses of the solitary wilderness and in the social walks of the populous city. With the starry heavens above me, and having the earth for my bed,

I roll myself in a blanket, and without a dream to disturb my repose, pass the night in quiet, and never awake till the eyelids of morning are opened, and the penetrating rays of the sun look through the surrounding foliage.

"It may not be impertinent to observe that in this wilderness we neither see nor hear any birds of music. These frequent only the abodes of man. There is one *wood-bird*, not often seen, but heard without any melody in his note, in every part of the wilderness wherever I have been. In some parts of this extensive country, the wild pigeons breed in numbers almost infinite. I once passed an extensive valley where they had rested; and for six or eight miles, where the trees were near and thick, every tree had a number of nests upon it, and some not less than fifteen or twenty upon them. But as soon as their young are able, they take wing and are seen no more."

The next extract is from the journal of May 30th, 1753:

"We were impatient to see the famous Susquehanna, and as soon as we came, Mr. Woodbridge and I walked down to its banks. Disappointed at the smallness of its stream, he exclaimed, 'Is this the Susquehanna?'

"When we returned our young Indians, who had halted, came in, looking as terrible and ugly as they could, having bedaubed their faces with vermilion, lamp-black, white lead, etc. A young Indian always carries

with him his looking glass and paint; and does not consider himself as dressed until he has adjusted his countenance by their assistance.

“Mr. Woodbridge and Mrs. Ashley, our interpreter, could not travel any further by land. We therefore concluded to get a canoe and convey them by water. From this place (now Colliers) to Onohoghwege is three days’ journey; and how bad the traveling is we cannot tell.

“May 31st, (1753). We met with difficulty about getting a canoe, and sent an Indian into the woods to get ready a bark, but he made small progress.

“In the afternoon came from Otsego Lake, which is the source of this stream, George Windecker and another, in a small batteau, with goods and rum, going down to Onohoghwege upon a trading voyage. We agreed with them to carry the interpreter and Mr. Woodbridge in their batteau; and bought a wooden canoe to carry our flour and baggage.

“We soon saw the ill effects of Windecker’s rum. The Indians began to drink and some of our party were the worse for it. We perceived what was coming.

“June 1st, 1753, is with me a memorable day, and for forty years and more has not passed unnoticed. We got off as silently as we could with ourselves and our effects. Some went by water and others by land, with the horses. I was with the land party. The Indians, half intoxicated, were outrageous, and pursued both



the party by water, in which was Mr. Woodbridge, and the party by land. One came so near us as with his club to strike at us, and he hit one of our horses. We hastened. Neither party met till we arrived at Wauteghe (the name of the Indian village at the mouth of the Otego creek), at which had been an Indian village, where were a few fruit trees and considerable cleared land, but no inhabitants. Here, being unmolested and secure, we all refreshed ourselves. But Pallas was the worse for his rum; was so refractory that Mr. Ashley's hired man, who had been in the canoe with him, was afraid. I reproved him; got into the canoe to keep him in order; was young and inexperienced; knew not much of Indians, nor much of mankind; whereby I endangered my life."

In 1763, Rev. Mr. Wheelock made application to Gen. Amherst for a land grant in the following words: "That a tract of land, about fifteen or twenty miles square, or so much as shall be sufficient for four townships, on the west side of Susquehanna river, or in some other place more convenient, in the heart of the Indian country, be granted in favor of this school. The said townships be peopled with a chosen number of inhabitants of known honesty, integrity, and such as love and will be kind to, and honest in their dealings with Indians.

"That a thousand acres of, and within said grant be given to this school; part of it to be a college for the

education of missionaries, interpreters, school-masters, etc.; and part of it a school to teach reading, writing, etc. And that there be manufactures for the instruction of both males and females in whatever shall be useful and necessary in life, and proper tutors, masters and mistresses be provided for the same."

In 1770 a grant of 26,000 acres of land was made to Sir William Johnson. This tract was largely in the present town of Oneonta. How far it extended down the river from the Otego creek is not certain. It appears to have included the land on both sides of the Susquehanna west of the Otego creek, and some old deeds are in existence which refer to Johnson's patent. It has been erroneously supposed that this tract was known as "Dreamland." But this tract was granted by a royal patent. Dreamland was acquired by grant or deed from King Hendrick. As the story goes Hendrick related to Sir William a "dream" that the latter had presented him with a new suit of clothes. Johnson fulfilled the dream by presenting the chief with the suit, and soon afterwards told him of a dream in which Sir William had been given by Hendrick a large tract of land. The reply of the latter was "I suppose what white man dreams must be true, but don't dream again." The tract thus acquired was in the town of Danube, Herkimer county. (Benton's History of Herkimer also Annals of Tryon county).



## CHAPTER II.

### EARLY SETTLERS IN ONEONTA.

**T**HE first settlers in this part of the valley were from the older settlements on the Mohawk. Among the earliest pioneers was Henry Schramling and family from German Flats. He came some years before the war began, and settled near the Otego creek bridge.

Some idea can be formed of the hardships endured by this family when it is recalled that the mill, for flouring their grain, was on the Mohawk, east of Fort Plain. The grain was conveyed in small boats or canoes to the head of Otsego lake and thence to its destination by pack-horses. To make this journey of fifty miles or more and return required several days. The wants of the family could be supplied in no other way except when dire necessity brought into use the Indian mortar and pestle. The troubled condition of the country after the year 1775 compelled Mr. Schramling to return to his former home on the Mohawk. After the close of hostilities, he, with his brothers George and David, came back to the Susquehanna.

Previous to the close of the war John VanDerwerker, from Schoharie, had built a grist mill which has already been alluded to. It appears on good authority that his daughter Polly was the first white child known to have

been born in the town as it now is, which birth occurred in the year 1782. This Polly afterwards became the wife of Tice Couse, a famous deer-hunter. Abram Houghtaling was the first male child born in town, his birth being in 1786.

The first settlements were made near the river, and probably, in most cases, not far from the old Indian trail.

Abram Houghtaling, Elias Brewer and Peter Swartz became settlers here in 1786. Houghtaling and Brewer came from Washington county, and Swartz from Schoharie. About the same date, James Young settled near the mouth of the Charlotte, and Baltus Kimball settled north of the village on the farm next east of Glenwood cemetery.

About the year 1790, Thomas Morenus\* and Peter Swartz settled on the south side of the river. About the same time Frederick Brown came from Fulton, N. Y., and settled on the farm later owned and occupied by E. R. Ford. At this time Brown's house was the only frame house standing within the limits of the present village corporation. About the year 1780, Aaron Brink built a large log house, which stood east of Main street near the railroad crossing. Brink's house was

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\*Thomas Morenus, before settling here, had been a captive among Indians, and had "run the gauntlet" at Fort Niagara. The terrible scourging he had received at the hands of the savages left marks which were plainly traceable when he had become an old man.

the first hotel kept in the village of Oneonta, perhaps the first that was kept in town. Between Brown's house and Brink's tavern there was only a common wood-road, with a dense forest on either side. Afterwards John Fritts kept a tavern at the northwest corner of Main and Chestnut streets.

In 1791, Asel Marvin came from Vermont and first settled at Oneonta Plains. Shortly afterwards he removed on a large tract of wild land, about two miles from the village, upon the Oneonta Creek. He was a well-known builder and lumberman. For twenty-two consecutive years he rafted lumber to Baltimore. He built the first school house on the Oneonta creek road, and when the first church edifice was built in town, he was one of the trustees of the church society. When Mr. Marvin moved into the valley of the Oneonta Creek, the country across the hill from Oneonta to Laurens, was almost an unbroken wilderness.

Some years later than the last named date, Peter Dinninny opened the first store kept in town. The store then stood where the Stanton opera house block now stands. The first school house was built soon after 1790, and stood on the rise of ground on the south side of the river near the Youngman farm.

Previous to 1816, when the Presbyterian church was built, church services were generally held in Frederick Brown's barn. The first clergyman who regularly preached here was the Rev. Alfred Conkey, who was

settled at Milford. Mr. Conkey was a very earnest and zealous man, besides being a person of liberal culture.

John and Nicholas Beams were early settlers to the east of the village. Elisha Shepherd came from New England at an early day and settled at Oneonta Plains. His sons, in after years, became actively engaged in different branches of industry, and the Plains at one time bid fair to become the most prominent village in town. It contained a hotel, a store, two churches and a distillery.

Andrew Parish was also one of the pioneers of Oneonta. He was born in Massachusetts in 1786, and moved from Springfield here in 1808. He settled on the south side of the river on the John Fritts farm, now owned by Mr. E. H. Pardee, and afterwards on the hill near the "Round Top." From the latter place he moved to the farm formerly owned by his son, the late Stephen, on the south side of the river. Mr. Parish reared a large family of children, all of whom became successful farmers, and men of business. Andrew Parish was a justice of the town for twenty years in succession. He was also a commissioner of schools under the old system. In 1809 he put up a brick kiln on the Elisha Shepherd farm at the Oneonta Plains, from which came the first bricks that were used in town.

Dr. Joseph Lindsay was the first physician in Oneonta. He came from Pelham, in the old county of







Hampshire, Mass., in the year 1807, settling first at Cherry Valley, where his uncle, John Lindsay, of New Hampshire, was at one time so large a land owner as to give to the place the local name of Lindsay's Bush. Having received a liberal education in the advanced schools of his native state and at Williams College, Dr. Lindsay in after years became a teacher to many of the younger people of the country who were ambitious of extending their studies beyond the rudimentary branches taught at that time in the schools of the neighborhood.

In 1815, Frederick Bornt moved on a farm on the east side of Oneonta creek near the lower reservoir. He had been a soldier in the war of 1812, and had served at the battle of Plattsburg. He came from Rensselaer county, N. Y.

Before the date last named, Jacob VanWoert, whose ancestors were from Holland, and father of the late Peter and John VanWoert, came from Albany and settled on the farm lately owned by his son Peter, near the mouth of the Otego creek. Asa Emmons about the same time settled on the south side of the river, near the Charlotte. He came from Vermont, and settled where Deacon Slade formerly lived. Jacob Wolf, the father of the late Conradt Wolf, had also made his home in the southern part of the town at about the close of the Revolutionary war. Mr. Wolf had been taken as an Indian captive to Canada, where he had been detained

for several years. His home, when captured, was in the valley of the Mohawk. While extinguishing a fire which had caught in a tall hemlock, by night, he was surprised by a company of Indians, by whom he was easily overpowered. He at length escaped from his captors, and making his way southward, after a long and perilous journey, he met with friends on the Tioga river. He rejoined his wife on the Mohawk, and afterwards removed to the Susquehanna, on the farm now owned by George Swart, southwest of the village.

Elihu Gifford, with four sons, came from Albany county in 1803, and first settled at West Oneonta, on the farm lately owned by Joseph Taber. In 1806, Mr. Gifford moved to the farm now owned by Henry Gifford on the Oneonta creek. About the same time Josiah Peet and Ephriam Farrington moved into the same neighborhood. Later Col. Wm. Richardson settled further up the creek and built a saw-mill and a grist-mill. "Richardson's Mills" became a well-known place in a few years, and a thriving hamlet soon began to form around them. Col. Richardson was an enterprising man of business and took a prominent part in the affairs of the town. He served in the war of 1812-15.

When Elihu Gifford moved to the Oneonta creek there were only four "clearings" in that valley. A Mr. Armitage had made some inroads upon the wilderness, on what is now known as the Losee farm, by the lower



reservoir; Asel Marvin had made a clearing on the James Sheldon farm, and there were others on Mrs. Richardson's farm, and where Peter Yager formerly lived. The settlers along the Oneonta creek, after Mr. Marvin, moved in slowly.

About 1804, David Yager came from Greenbush, N. Y., and purchased the farm now known as the Peter Yager farm. Solomon Yager, the father of David, came afterwards, purchasing his son's farm.\*

Timothy Murphy, the famous scout, was at one time a resident of the town, his home then being on the South Side of the river on what is generally known as the Slade farm, now owned by Rev. Granville Rathbun. He had served in the south as one of Morgan's riflemen. His first wife and her babe having been scalped by the savages near Schoharie, he became the implacable foe of the Indians. He was a daring and wary Irishman, and lost no opportunity to wreak vengeance upon them, and had many narrow escapes. Murphy's exploits are quite fully set forth in the histories of Schoharie county.

James McDonald settled at the lower end of the village at an early date. Mr. McDonald was of Scotch descent, and an active business man. He was a descendant of the great clan that was broken in Scotland in

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\*For the purpose of showing the increase in the value of real estate, it may be mentioned that at the time David Yager sold to his father, he was offered a farm lying between Maple street and the farm of J. R. L. Walling, containing 150 acres, for \$400.

1692. Families from this clan emigrated to Nova Scotia from whence representatives migrated to the colony of New York early in the XVIII century. The original McDonald hotel is still standing on the north-west corner of Main and River streets, now transformed into a dwelling house. The lower part of the village was largely built through his enterprise, and at one time bid fair to become the business center of the village. He built a mill and hotel, and also became an extensive landowner. He kept the first post-office established within the limits of the town.

The first settlers were mostly German Palatinates from Schoharie and the Mohawk. The German was the language of common conversation, and so continued until Dr. Lindsay and Asa Emmons came into the settlement. At this time the Emmons and Lindsay families were the only ones that made the English their exclusive language.

These German settlers were a patient and persevering people, and betook themselves to the task of felling the forest and rearing homes for themselves and their posterity, with a noble and praiseworthy resolution. Beneath the sturdy strokes of the axe, the wilderness slowly but gradually disappeared around their rude homes, and in the place of the gloomy forest, fields of waving grain appeared on every side to cheer and encourage the industrious woodsman. The forests abounded in the most ravenous animals, such as bears,

panthers, and wolves, while along the river and creek bottoms the ground was at places almost literally covered with poisonous reptiles. The climate was severe, and the country remote from the frontier, yet notwithstanding the obstacles and discouragements that beset them, these were not sufficient to cause the settlers to relax their efforts to rear comfortable homes for their descendants.

As the following extract from an old book vividly describes the perils and adventures of the pioneer hunters, and conveys a good idea of some of the game of the country, I have quoted freely:

“Ben Wheaton was one of the first settlers on the waters of the Susquehanna, immediately after the war, a rough, uncultivated and primitive man. As many others of the same stamp and character, he subsisted chiefly by hunting, cultivating the land but sparingly, and in this way raised a numerous family amid the woods, in a half starved condition and comparative nakedness. But as the Susquehanna country rapidly increased in population, the hunting grounds of Wheaton were encroached upon; so that a chance with his smooth-bore, among the deer and bears was lessened. On this account Wheaton removed from the Susquehanna country, in Otsego county, to the more unsettled wilds of Delaware, near a place yet known by the appellation of Wait’s Settlement, where game was more plenty. The distance from where he made his home in the woods,

through to the Susquehanna, was about fifteen miles, and was one continuous wilderness at that time. Through these woods this almost aboriginal hunter was often compelled to pass to the Susquehanna, for various necessities, and among the rest no small quantity of whiskey, as he was of very intemperate habits. On one of these visits, in the midst of summer, with his smooth-bore always on his shoulder, knife, hatchet, etc., in their proper place, he had nearly penetrated the distance, when he became weary, and having come to the summit of a ridge (sometime in the afternoon) which overlooks the vale of the Susquehanna, he selected a convenient place in the shade, as it was hot, for the rays of the sun from the west poured his sultry influence through all the forest, where he lay down to rest awhile among the leaves, after having taken a drink from his pint bottle of green glass, and a mouthful of cold Johnny cake from his pocket.

"In this situation he was soothed to drowsiness by the hum of insects, and the monotony of passing winds among the foliage around him, when he soon unwarily fell asleep with his gun folded in his arms. But after a while he awoke from his sleep, and for a moment or two still lay in the same position, as it happened, without stirring, when he found that something had taken place while he had slept, which had situated him somewhat differently from the manner in which he first went to sleep. On reflecting a moment, he found that he was

entirely covered over, head and ears, with leaves and light stuff, occasioned, as he now suspected, either by the sudden blowing of the wind, or by some wild animal. On which account he became a little disturbed in his mind, as he well knew the manner of the panther at that season of the year, when it hunts to support its young, and will often cover its prey with leaves and bring its whelps to the banquet. He therefore continued to lie perfectly still, as when he first awoke. He thought he heard the step of some kind of heavy animal near him; and he knew that if it were a panther, the distance between himself and death could not be far, if he should attempt to rise up. Accordingly, as he suspected, after having lain a full minute, he now distinctly heard the retiring tread of the stealthy panther, of which he had no doubt, from his knowledge of the creature's ways. It had taken but a few steps however, when it again stopped a longer time; still Wheaton continued his silent position, knowing his safety depended much on this. Soon the tread was again heard, farther and farther off, till it entirely died away in the distance. but he still lay motionless a few minutes longer, when he ventured gently and cautiously to raise his head and cast an eye in the direction the creature, whatever it was, had gone, but could see nothing. He now rose up with a spring, for his blood had been running from his heart to his extremities, and back again, with uncommon velocity; all the while his ears had listened to the



steps of the animal on the leaves and brush. He now saw plainly the marks of design among the leaves, and that he had been covered over, and that the paws of some creature had done it.

“And as he suspected the panther was the animal, he knew it would soon return to kill him, on which account he made haste to deceive it, and to put himself in a situation to give it a taste of the contents of old smooth-bore. He now seized upon some pieces of old wood which lay all about, and placed as much as was equal to his own bulk, exactly where he had slept, and covered it over with leaves in the same manner the panther had done, and then sprang to a tree near by, into which he ascended, from whence he had a view a good distance about him, and especially in the direction the creature had gone. Here in the crotch of the tree he stood, with his gun resting across a limb, in the direction of the place where he had been left by the panther, looking sharply as far among the woods as possible, in the direction he expected the creature’s return. But he had remained in this condition but a short time, and had barely thrust the ram-rod down the barrel of his piece, to be sure the charge was in her, and to examine her priming, and to shut down the pan slowly, so that it should not snap, and thus make a noise, when his keen Indian eye, for such he had, caught a glimpse of a monstrous panther, leading warily two panther kittens toward her intended supper.

“Now matters were hastening to a climax rapidly, when Wheaton or the panther must finish their hunting on the mountains of the Susquehanna, for if old smooth-bore should flash in the pan, or miss her aim, the die would be cast, as a second load would be impossible ere her claws would have sundered his heart strings in the tree where he was, or if he should but partially wound her the same must have been his fate. During these thoughts the panther had hid her young under some brush, and had come within some thirty feet of the spot where she supposed her victim was still sleeping; and seeing all as she had left it, she dropped down to a crouching position, precisely as a cat, when about to spring on its prey. Now was seen the soul of the panther in its perfection, emerging from the recesses of nature where hidden by the creator, along the whole nervous system, but resting chiefly in the brain, whence it glared, in bright horror, from the burning eyes, curled in the strong and vibrating tail, pushed out the sharp, white and elliptical fangs from the broad and powerful claws ready for rending, glittered on the points of its uncovered teeth, and smoked in rapid tissues of steam from its red and open jaws, while every hair of its long dun back stood erect in savage joy, denoting that the fatal and decisive moment of its leap had come.

“Now the horrid nestling of its hinder claws, drawn under its belly was heard, and the bent ham-strings were seen but a half instant by Wheaton, from where he sat

in his tree, when the tremendous leap was made. It rose on a long curve in the air, of about ten feet in the highest place, and from thence descending, it struck exactly where the breast, head and bowels of its prey had lain, with a scream too horrible for description, when it tore to atoms the rotten wood, filling for several feet above it, the air with the leaves and light brush, the covering of the deception. But instantly the panther found herself cheated, and seemed to droop a little with disappointment, when however she resumed an erect posture, and surveyed quite around on every side on a horizontal line, in search of her prey, but not discovering it, she cast a furious look aloft among the tops of the trees, when in a moment or two the eyes of Wheaton and the panther met. Now for another leap, when she dropped for that purpose; but the bullet and two buck shot of old smooth-bore were too quick, as he lodged them all exactly in the brain of the savage monster, and stretched her dead on the spot where the hunter had slept but a short time before, in the soundness of a mountain dream.

“Wheaton had marked the spot where her young were hidden, which, at the report of the gun, were frightened and ran up a tree. He now came down and found the panther to measure, from the end of its nose to the point of its tail, eight feet six inches in length; a creature sufficiently strong to have carried him off on a full run, had he fallen into its power. He now reloaded



and went to the tree where her kittens, or the young panthers were, and soon brought them down from their grapple among the limbs, companions for their conquered and slain parent.

“Wheaton dismantled them of their hides, and hastened away before the night should set in, lest some other encounter might overtake him of a similar character, when the disadvantage of darkness might decide the victory in a way more advantageous to the roamers of the forest. Of this feat Ben Wheaton never ceased to boast; reciting it as the most appalling passage of his hunting life. The animal had found him while asleep and had him concealed, as he supposed, intending to give her young a specimen of the manner of their future life; or if this is too much for the mind of a dumb animal, she intended to give them a supper.

“This circumstance was all that saved his life, or the panther would have leapt upon him at first, and have torn him in pieces, instead of covering him with leaves as she did, for the sake of her young. The panther is a ferocious and almost untamable animal, whose nature and habits are like those of the cat; except that the nature and powers of this domestic creature are in the panther immensely magnified, in strength and voracity. It is in the American forest what the tiger is in Africa and India, a dangerous and savage animal, the terror of all other creatures, as well as of the Indian and the white man.”

Other famous hunters were Michael Hilsinger, one Mayall, and Tice Couse. Mayall's hunting exploits were mainly along the Otego creek, though some of his adventures took him far up and down the Susquehanna valley. Couse's field of operation sometimes extended far over into Delaware county. Hilsinger on one occasion had a narrow escape in a conflict with a large black bear in the ravine along Silver creek. In this fight the hunter was drawn into deep water and had dropped his gun and came out victorious only by the use of his hunting knife with which he despatched the bear.

Another old timer was David T. Evans, who came to Oneonta in 1829 from Washington county. Dr. Evans as he was called, was a well-known character of local fame as a story teller, who was wont to regale evening audiences in the village stores with his wonderful tales.

### CHAPTER III.

#### PROMINENT MEN OF THE TOWN.

**I**T is impossible to mention the names of all of the early business men of the village, but it is only just that their names should be carried down to the generations that are to come:

Prominent among the early settlers of Oneonta was Jacob Dietz, who removed into the settlement from Schoharie county about the year 1804. Mr. Dietz was early appointed a justice of the peace, and continued in office either by appointment or election for a great length of time. He was a long time in mercantile business, and his store, which was situated where now stands the First National Bank block, was the center of a lively trade for those times. Mr. Dietz accumulated an extensive estate, and reared a large family of children. He became the owner of extensive tracts of land, some of which are now occupied by the streets and residences of the village.

About the same period, 1804-5, one Joseph Westcott, from the present town of Milford, erected a store nearly opposite the residence of R. W. Miller. These stores—Dinninny's, mentioned in the preceding chapter, Dietz's and Westcott's—were all of the most primitive order,

and contained but a meagre stock of goods. There was but little money and the merchants' trade was carried on mostly in the way of barter, the tradesman exchanging his merchandise for grain, lumber and shingles.

Early in the history of the town, a Mr. Walling, the grandfather of the late J. R. L. Walling, located to the east of Oneonta creek, near where his descendant above named formerly resided. One Newkirk also settled on Chestnut street, on the lot adjoining the home of L. B. Lennon. Lawrence Swart settled on the farm now occupied by Henry Wilcox, about the same time that Jacob Dietz came into the settlement.

At the time of Swart's settlement the land on the lower end of River street was covered by a dense forest of hemlock and maple. Over those attractive and well-tilled fields now composing the Henry Wilcox farm, roamed at that time the bear and the panther, and glided with little molestation numberless rattlesnakes of the largest and most poisonous species. The settlement along the river, below the Scramling residence, seemed to proceed slowly, as the land below this point was considered of but little value, while the heavy growth of hemlock precluded the rapid clearing away of the forest. To the north and east of the village the hillsides yielded a vast quantity of the more valuable timber.

Among the early inhabitants of Oneonta, whose en-

terprise contributed to the development of the resources of the town, was William Angell, who soon after his settlement here became the most prominent inhabitant of the village. He built the Oneonta House, where he acted as host for a number of years. He was also one of the proprietors of the Charlotte turnpike, which, upon its completion in 1834, was made the great highway from Catskill to the southwestern portion of the state.

Timothy Sabin, a native of the town, upon arriving at the age of manhood, embarked in mercantile pursuits, and continued to an advanced age to lend his aid to the management of an extensive business. Another of the older class of men of the village was John M. Watkins, born in Oneonta in 1806. For thirty years Mr. Watkins was one of the leading hotel keepers of the village, and during this long period in which he acted the part of host, his house was known far and wide as the best kept hostelry in this section.

Occupying a prominent position among those who, at an early date, emigrated into the town was Eliakim R. Ford. Mr. Ford was born in Albany county in 1797, and removed to Greenville, Greene county, when quite young. From the latter place he removed to Oneonta in 1822, he then being twenty-five years of age. He at once embarked in mercantile enterprises and so conducted his business matters as to rapidly win both the confidence and trade of his fellow citizens.

His first store stood near the Free Baptist church. From that point he removed to a store next to the lot where now the Stanton block stands, and in 1828 he again moved into a store which he had built near the residence of Harvey Baker. His late residence was built in 1839-40.

Dr. Samuel H. Case settled in the village of Oneonta in 1829. He was born in Franklin, N. Y., in 1808, and at the age of twenty-one was graduated at the medical college at Fairfield, N. Y. More than sixty years he continued the practice of medicine in the village and throughout the surrounding country. There are but few among the longer resident population of the community who have not, at one time or another, been under the Doctor's treatment. When he moved into the village, the latter contained only two painted houses, and the whole business prosperity of the hamlet was then centered in two stores—Dietz's and Ford's—one potash and two distilleries.

Though not a resident of the town, yet his business relations were such as to identify the name of Jared Goodyear with its history. Mr. Goodyear for a long term of years resided upon the borders of Oneonta, and from an early period was largely interested in the business of the village. He was born in Connecticut, and while a boy removed to Schoharie county, whence he came to Colliersville while yet a young man, and there he resided the remainder of his life. By persistent





MAIN ST. LOOKING EAST.  
— ONEONTA — 1870. —





industry Mr. Goodyear accumulated a large fortune, and won a high reputation for integrity.

Harvey Baker, coming from Broome county, early identified himself with the business interests of the community. For more than sixty years he resided here and took an active part in whatever work tended to the advancement of the public welfare. With others he was of great assistance in the long struggle that preceded the completion of the Albany and Susquehanna railroad.

William McCrum has passed most of a long lifetime here, and has always been interested in the prosperity of the people and their social advancement. Mr. McCrum came here in 1839 from Hobart, Delaware county, his birth-place.

About the last named date William W. Snow came here from his birth-place in Franklin county, Mass. He became a prominent figure among his fellow men, and was at different periods their representative in congress and the State legislature.

Solon Huntington, from Huntington, Conn., settled here in 1840. Soon after he was joined by his brother, Collis P. Huntington. Solon became an extensive land owner, while the two were engaged in various manufacturing works and also as merchants in a general country store, until the departure of Collis P. for California in 1850. For some years the Huntington brothers were in the merchantile business in the building known as

the Mendel store. After the departure of Collis P. for California, Solon became largely engaged in agriculture, having become the owner of extensive tracts of land in and about this town. C. P. Huntington early became interested in the development of the Pacific coast. He, associated with others, built the Central Pacific and the Southern Pacific railroads. He was also largely engaged in ship building and in the management of various steamboat lines. Representatives of Mr. Huntington are still carrying out the work of developing the railway system of California.

Among the settlers on the east side of Otego creek on the road leading to Laurens was Ezra White, who became a resident early in the last century. Joseph Hodge came from Washington county in 1804, and became an inhabitant of the same neighborhood. There some of his descendants still reside.

Ezra Gates and Stoughton Alger were pioneer farmers at the Plains.

The father of the late Samuel Richards from the East established a home near the Plains where afterwards a number of his descendants became largely interested in farming and mechanical pursuits.

Among the early settlers on the south side of the Susquehanna was James Blanchard, who was a sturdy native of New England. He was the father of twelve children, one of whom was missed at roll call and was afterwards found asleep between the rows in the potato field. The

father then instructed the mother to carefully count them over every evening. They all became progenitors of a good class of citizens.

A worthy settler on the Plains road was Orrin Beach, who came from Jefferson, N. Y., in 1840. His descendants continued to occupy the same farm for many years.





## CHAPTER IV.

### PIONEER EXPERIENCES.

**R**EVERTING to earlier times, I find in "Priest's Collection" already cited, a narrative of much interest relative to the experiences of a pioneer family in the Susquehanna valley. They were located, apparently, some miles further down the river; but the scenes and events described might as well have been witnessed here. As the book is rare, I give liberal quotations, thinking I could not better serve the reader, in whose further interest I have here and there condensed and rearranged somewhat:

"The shortness of the time between the arrival of the family and the setting in of winter prevented the building of a larger and better house. During the severe weather following they became experimentally acquainted with cold, hunger and a variety of sorrows, known only to pioneers of an entire new country. Money was of but little use, as food was not to be bought where there was none for sale. There were but five families in the whole community, who having come in the spring of the same season, therefore had time to raise but little. To procure food from a distance was also extremely difficult, there being no settlement where it could be had nearer than old Schoharie, about seventy-five

miles away, to which place at that time the road was not much better than none at all. This dreadful winter at last passed away, and with it, in a measure, their sufferings; as by this time they had learned of the Indians how to catch fish, which abounded in the river, coves and creeks of the country. Without this relief they must have finally perished.

"But now a new scene of things, such as I had never before witnessed," says Mrs. Priest. "was about to captivate our attention. March had begun to yield its rains; the snow to feel its dissolving power; every rill and creek of the mountains to swell and roar, plunging forward over crag and cleft to the vales below. The devious Susquehanna began to put on majesty, drinking largely of its annual libation from earth and sky, swelling the headlong waters, which as they rose lifted and tore away the ice from the shores and promontories. Loud sounds were heard to moan along the thick-ribbed ice, the covering of the waters bursting in ten thousand places with the noise of tempests. Already the banks were overflowed, and the distant forests of the flats along the river inundated with the sweeping flood, to the very base of the hills. The broken ice began to move, large islands of it to rush upon each other, still breaking more and more, urging its way forward with resistless fury. Now the roar increases, large fields of ice plunge into the woods on either shore; the trees bending, groan and snap asunder beneath the overwhelming load, the ice still



passing on till thrown in huge heaps along the shore and in the adjacent woods. Still the main stream pursues its way; every moment adds to the enormous weight it bears. As far as the eye can view, from the tops of commanding eminences, above, below, all in commotion, plunging onward with a loud and steady roar, till stayed on some long level in the river. Here it makes a stand, or but slowly moves; as a vast army on the verge of battle, which halts to adjust its prowess, then to move on again. So the river in its grandeur resumed its course a moment, while from shore to shore the ice stood piled in pyramids, chafing up and down as if in anger. But now the level narrows to a defile between the mountains, when all at once the mass for many miles above, with whirling eddies stood at bay. Now suddenly the waters rise and boil and foam through all the heaps and ranks of massive ice. The upper floods having gathered head, urge on with augmented power the water's course. All at once the frozen dam gives way and rushes on with sound of thunder. Fury and desolation mark its progress, trees torn from their roots lunge here and there; old timber with fences swept from the fields and woods mingle in the ruin. Onward roars the unconquered deluge, from Otsego lake to where the frightful Caughnawaga dashes to foam the descending river with the subdued and shivered ice which ends the scene.

“The sun had gained in this month, the month of March, a higher northern altitude, throwing his fiery

beams through all the frozen woods by day, while by night the chill of the frost resumed its sway. Thus alternate between the powers above and the powers below, the juices of the maple were made to flow, when was commenced the curious and arduous work of manufacturing maple sugar. A more pleasing sight than an extensive sugar works, filling by its various branches of operation that space of time with profit and pleasure between the ending of winter and the blooming spring, is not witnessed in a new country. To see from a thousand trees at once of the majestic rock maple the lucious juice streaming as from so many fountains, is highly delightful, especially to the isolated backwoodsman; as well as profitable. So it proved to the family of Beach, who were in want of all things.

“But soon this scene had passed away, when May and June, with their ten thousand blossoms, decked the earth. Here flourished the mountain laurel, over entire ranges of the mountains, which in time of spring is thickly set with flowers, covering the evergreen limbs and leaves of the shrub with an immensity of red and white. This bramble has become the emblem of honor, and as such in ancient times encircled the brows of kings and heroes, because it is an evergreen. On the plains, among the sweet fern, grew a beautiful flower called the *honey-suckle*. The banks of the river and margins of lesser streams, were in many places adorned with the water pink (cardinal?) a flower of the deepest red that grows



on nature's commons. The scarlet wild balm of the alluvials stood in groups here and there, protected by the warrior nettle, well known to the bare-legged and bare-footed boys of those early times. The wild lily of the hills, meadows and marshes bowed here and there its maculate head, which, while it attracts the eye, impresses the mind with a solitary yet tender emotion. In shady and secluded places grew a beautiful flower, variagated with stripes of white, red and yellow, having in shape a surprising resemblance to a real *lady's slipper*. In marshy places were entire patches of the golden *cowslip*, the herb of which furnishes a gentle repast, not to be rejected by even the sumptuous tables of luxury.

"The boxwood (dogwood?), a tree known to ancient and to modern artists as a wood valuable for musical instruments, was seen as a stranger enlivening the gloom of the mountains, with a redundancy of its large white blossoms. The *mountain ash* was found in the dreary swamps of cold and elevated lands, the slender branches of which are beautifully ornamented with thick clusters of scarlet berries, and are in the height of perfection in the depth of winter, forming a delightful contrast with the whiteness of the virgin snows.

"Here were various nut-bearing trees, as the butternut, the chestnut, the walnut, and the beechnut, growing on the highland ridges and in the vales, furnishing food and luxury during the evenings of the long winter

nights. The grape vine was also found climbing the tallest trees, and winding its tendrils among the branches of the forest.

“At this time a certain root, now almost, if not quite extinct, grew in abundance on the richest soils along the shores of rivers and creeks, which came early in the summer to perfection; this was the *leek*, and for aught we know was the famous *Egyptian leek*, and to the first settlers was of great use, being in no sense inferior to the onion, except in size. Another root which, when roasted, was also good for food, was the *ground-nut*, (wild bean), about the size of a large musket ball, and grew abundantly in the mellow soil of the river flats, in a wild state. This, too, is now nearly extinct. In some places were found a few wild plums, brought no doubt from the far west, by the Indians, where they flourish abundantly. Mandrakes, a fruit now but little known, was then exceedingly abundant, growing on a plant about a foot high, bearing but one apple; but this, when fully ripe, was highly palatable and good, as a transient luxury.

“A multitude of berries, of the most delicious flavor, grew here without end. The whortle berry was chief, as to quantity, covering entire tracts of mountain and plain of a certain description of soil, furnishing both to men and animals, especially the bear, a good and nutritious food. But besides these there was, and still is, the *blackberry*, the *raspberry* of various kinds, the *goose-*

berry, with the wild currant; all of which are delicious, and to the first settlers were a grateful relief in the hour of hunger, during the season which produces them.

“At the opening of the spring innumerable birds carolled from the budding branches of the woods, while ten thousand came flying from the south of such kinds as follow the mild temperature, between cold and heat. Of such is the pigeon, countless millions of which came on the winds, stretching their feathery battallions across the whole arch of heaven and filling the wilderness with the cheerful cry of *“tweet, tweet,”* as if they called for wheat, their favorite food. These little innocents, sent of heaven to supply their wants amid the solitudes of the west, after the horrors of such a winter, were received at that time with shouts and gladness. The net, the gun, with every other means which the hungry ingenuity of the inhabitants could invent, were employed to ensnare them. Ducks of several kinds, flying up and down the river, enlivened the scene; settling now and then in the eddies of the stream. The mountain partridge, the wildest bird among the fowls of heaven, was heard to drum, sitting upon its chosen log, with beating wings, which quiver in the wind not less rapid than those of the burnished humming-bird.

“At this season of the year (March and April), large flocks of the wild goose or brant, high soaring in the air, passed onward in the forked shape of the farmer’s drag, following the scream of the parent leader, on their an-

nual jaunt from the islands of the sea to the north and western lakes. These sometimes by a messenger from the sharp, quick-spoken rifle, were briefly invited to descend from the fields above, laden with flesh and feathers, plump and fair, a dainty good enough for kings.

“Even the night was not without its music; as the sweet but lonesome whip-poor-will sung in all directions its three-syllabled song, of *“whip-poor-will, whip-poor-will,”* till morning light. Then hooted the owl, a bird famous among the Greeks for wisdom, the sound of whose voice is better far than no noise at all, and bespeaks by its gruff and far-sounding tones a race of feathered giants, peopling the tree tops of the highest mountains, as well as the deepest glens.

“In those early times, before the Susquehanna was interrupted by mill-dams, and its lucid waters beclouded with sawdust, it abounded with shad, from the sea. These, seeking the still, deep waters of Otsego lake—where to hide their incipient millions, the embryo children for another year’s generation—the first settlers, without the common seine, contrived to take in the following singular manner: A whole neighborhood of the inhabitants would join together, and select some island situated near the middle of the river, with a low, gravelly beach, extending some way up the stream. At the upper end of this they would drive down into the sand and gravel a row of large stakes, in a circle of

sufficient circumference to enclose a rod square of space. At the upper side of this space a door was left open, looking up the stream. Between these stakes, which rose two and three feet above the level of the water, they wove from the bottom to their tops small green bushes close together, so that a shad of the smallest size could not pass through. Then from both sides of the door was driven a row of stakes extending quite to both shores of the river, running in a slanting direction up the stream; between these also was woven green bushes in the same manner, as the pound or circle, destined to receive the shad. When this was finished the whole company, consisting of fifteen, twenty or thirty, as the case might be, went all together several miles up the river to a convenient still, deep place, where they as quickly as possible constructed a huge bush fence extending quite across the river, made of the green bushes of the woods, fastening it firmly together; this they called a bush seine. It was then loosened from the shores and dragged down the stream, the water above being filled with canoes, men, boys, and dogs; hallooing, barking, yelling, and splashing in the water, making as much noise as possible. By this means the shad were frightened, and turned down the river, while on followed the seine toward the winged enclosure. In passing over the rifts or shallows, the frightened fishes were frequently seen tumbling over each other, flapping and floundering to get into deeper water. Soon the



floating winrow of wood was driven on between the spreading wings of the weir, as it was called—which had caused the waters to rise a foot or two within—doubling as it was forced between the wings, concentrating a mass of brush, canoes, boys, dogs, and men, inclosing sometimes several hundred shad in the fatal pen. Here leaping in among them head and ears, the fishes were thrown on the dry beach, where they were placed in as many heaps as there were sharers, when one of the number turned his back and cried them off, as it was said to him, “Who shall have this?” and “Who shall this?” till the whole was disposed of, which ended the fishing expedition, when they dispersed to their several homes to enjoy the fruit of their labor.

“By the second year after their arrival, Beach and his family had made considerable improvement upon his lands. A variety of the rewards of husbandry were springing from the soil, promising in the autumn an abundant recompense for their labor. They had among the variety of the field a beautiful plot of flax, from which they expected to replenish their clothing, which was now nearly worn out. The family felt now a tolerable assurance that the period of their privations was near its close, for the time of gathering in the produce, above alluded to, had nearly arrived. But that their wishes should be consummated, was not the will of heaven.

“On the sixth of October, the winds began to blow

from the south. Presently the rain began to dash in slanting torrents to the earth. Soon, however, the wind which was furious, veered around and blew from the north, when the clouds seemed a little disposed to scatter. This was cheering, for on the coming up of the storm they had feared an immediate inundation of all their fields, which lay on the margin of the river, the bank of which was very low. But this respite proved of short duration; for soon the whirling clouds resumed their blackness and again poured down their overwhelming waters. The small brooks and rills rapidly swelling, came tumbling from the mountains. Night set in and hid by its terrible darkness the devastation and danger. But sleep, says Mrs. Priest, came not to her eyelids. All night she watched the progress of the rising waters, frequently loosening the batteau and canoe, till by daylight they were moored at the threshold of the door, which ascertained at least a rise of water full ten feet in a few hours. The utmost of their fears was now realized, as they were entirely surrounded by the overflowing river, the house being on the highest ground. Their fields lay whelmed beneath the flood, while the brown deluge passed by with dreadful roaring, bearing on its bosom huge trees, drift-wood, and stacks of hay which had been gathered on the little meadows above; wheat and rye in the sheaf, pumpkins and flax torn up by the roots,—all afloat in one promiscuous ruin. The rain subsided, the waters fell, the

fields appeared again; but *all* was lost.

"We now," says Mrs. Priest, "betook ourselves to gather what we could from among the mud and sand, from the willows and flood-wood along the banks of the river, which was our only hope against another dreadful winter. As for me, I found myself nearly destitute of clothing and saw no way but to leave my home in quest of work, to earn among strangers the habiliments and comforts of life. But whither could I go? There were none living near but were in a similar situation with myself, and had lost their all in the same way; and could not therefore employ me, either to their own advantage or mine. Accordingly, in company with my father, I went very soon after this occurrence in a canoe up the river, toward the place now called Cooperstown, in quest of employment. A few miles below this place lived a family with whom my father was acquainted, whose circumstances in life were independent; where, through his influence, I obtained a temporary home.

"After awhile I left this place, and went further toward the Mohawk in quest of another. The day on which I left this family was a gloomy one, for it snowed fast and the distance to which I wished to go was twenty miles—the place now known as Cherry Valley. The way was chiefly through woods, where there were no inhabitants on the road. I set out on horseback, but alone. Many were the sad reflections which passed my mind at this time; as I remembered the comforts







of former days in the land of my nativity, old Connecticut. During these reflections, while descending along the deep, narrow snow path down a steep hill to a hemlock gulf, the gloom of which approached nearly to that of night, suddenly a monstrous wolf darted into the road, and stopped just before me. I knew not what to do; terror in an instant had frozen all my powers, so that I was nearly past feeling. It glared upon me a few moments, then slowly retired into the woods, constantly looking back, as if hesitating whether to attack or flee. At length I came to the little settlement where so much was endured from the knife and tomahawk of the Indians in the Revolution." At Cherry Valley Mrs. Priest met Judge Isaac Parris, living "about two hours' ride" toward the Mohawk. With his family she passed the next six months, when news of the sudden death of her father, by drowning, recalled her to the home clearing on the Susquehanna. Continues the narrative:

"After a settlement of my accounts with this worthy family (that of Judge Parris), I took my leave, when they bestowed the sum of eight dollars over and above my proper wages, as a token of the interest they took in my afflictions. On my way to the head of Otsego lake (to Springfield), I bought a bushel of wheat, and got it floured there; where I also procured a passage in a batteau down the lake and river, being an unexpected opportunity, which was a distance of fifty miles to where

my mother was. On the third day I came within sight of my home.

"I found them as I anticipated, entirely destitute of bread, and therefore hastened to relieve them with the flour I had provided. But on opening the sack, what was my surprise to find that the unprincipled miller had taken one-half of it and substituted in its place Indian meal; which, notwithstanding, made very good bread, yet afforded on that account no apology for the miller, as on his part it was an absolute theft. They were also nearly destitute of clothes; on which account I lingered not to distribute among them those I had procured during my eight months servitude, two months at the first place and six at the home of Judge Parris. A few days only passed after my return when my mother began to be more resigned and cheerful; new hope sprung up from the encouragement of conversation, and from my exertions to make them more comfortable. However it was evident that a settled melancholly had seized her for its victim, which never left her till it ended in complete distraction; out of which she finally emerged, but not until her last sickness, when the one fixed and direful thought, leading her to despair of final salvation, was suddenly extinguished by strong and certain hope of eternal happiness through the great Redeemer."

The want of grist-mills was a privation of no small magnitude, to the first settlers of the Susquehanna.

One story of hardship arising out of this circumstance will illustrate perhaps hundreds of like nature. Having for a long time made bread from corn pounded in a mortar, the family greatly coveted meal of a better quality, and hearing that some six or eight miles down the river was a mill newly built, they were anxious if possible to carry a little grain to be floured. Accordingly the eldest brother, a lad of about fifteen, undertook to carry on his back three pecks of corn to this mill, as from the time of the father's death all kinds of hardship incident to the care of the family had fallen to the share of this boy.

There was no road to the place, except the Indian path, which for ages had been the highway of warriors and hunters. The way was a gloomy one, being wholly through the woods, and accompanied by a circumstance which heightened in the child's imagination the terrors of the journey. The path led exactly by a certain tree, called the White Man's tree, where in the time of the Revolution the Indians had burnt a prisoner whom they had taken, the remembrance of which was painted, or stained, after the Indian manner, on the side of the tree. It was an elm, and was preserved many years after the country was settled as a memento of the tragical affair. It stood at the lower end of what is called the dug-way, immediately above the bridge which crosses the Susquehanna, near the upper end of the village called Unadilla. The ignorant, the superstitious, and

children on passing this tree never failed to fear lest the victim's spirit might appear.

Now as poor Richard drew near and still nearer this tree the more its dread increased upon him, till he fancied that in reality he saw something stir close by its roots. He now stood still, straining his eyes to undeceive himself if possible. But to no purpose; there certainly was something, and that something had motion. The more he looked, the more it seemed like a man. He now had thoughts of returning, it seeming impossible for him to approach, as the thing which seemed to be alive and had motion might be the ghost. If it was, he thought he should die if he spoke to it, or that some strange thing would certainly befall him. But rather than to give up his expedition in hope of obtaining some meal, he adventured slowly and cautiously a little nearer. Ere he was aware he trod on a dry stick, which broke, when in an instant the face of a man looked upon him and slowly rose to the height of a tall person. Richard now had no doubt but this was the soul of the burnt man; which so flurried his sight and confused his thought that it prevented his perceiving it to be a very aged Indian.

"The Indian, perceiving that the boy was frightened, spoke to him in English, in a good natured voice, and told him to come to him, as he would not hurt him. Richard now went boldly up to him, being naturally a stout-hearted boy, yet not without some trepidation.



"Sit down," said the Indian to the boy; "Me tell you something. See this tree?" and here he pointed to the painted marks on the smooth spot, where the bark had been removed for that purpose long before by the hatchet of the Indians; "Me cut that, *me* paint him, too. A hundred moons ago (about nine years), me, twenty Indians more, come through woods from Sopus country, North river—have five prisoner, tied hands behind 'em. One man get way, when all sleep, stole gun—five Indians follow him. We hear gun shoot, one Indian fall dead. Pretty soon 'nother gun shoot, Nother Indian fall dead. Me see him, me shoot—broke him leg—carry him back—tie him to tree—burn him to Great Spirit. His name Coons, Dutchmans. We go on to Canada. Me now go Canada forever, pretty soon." Here they parted, the boy to the mill, the lone Indian to his fellows.

"It was late in the fall. Poor Richard was literally clothed in rags, with nothing but some cloth moccasins on his feet, although there was then on the ground quite a flurry of snow. But he shouldered his bag and about twelve o'clock arrived safely at the mill. What was his disappointment on perceiving it to be a mere temporary thing, placed over a small rivulet, not capable of turning a wheel larger than a common grindstone. On application to the proprietor to know if he would grind the corn, he received for answer: "No, it is impossible; you see the stone is but a small and poor



one, which I have in the most miserable manner cut out of that rock there, and it will take all day to grind your grist; I cannot do it."

"This answer so discomfited and grieved Richard that he cried very much, all the while pleading with the man to grind his corn for him, as it was too hard to be obliged to carry it back in the same state he brought it, and disappoint his mother and the children, who had tasted no good bread for a great while. At length the man was moved with pity, and told him he would try. The mill was set in motion and the grain poured into the hopper, when he waited the residue of that day, all night, and till near noon the next day before the corn was ground. He now shouldered the precious burden and retraced his way. It was nearly night when he was heard to halloo to be brought over the river in the canoe. One of his feet was naked, having worn out the moccasin and left it on the way. He was nearly exhausted, having ate nothing from the time he left home till his return—two days and a night—except the raw meal from the bag; as the miller, either from neglect or hardness of heart, had offered him nothing, and he was too stout-hearted to ask for any.

"In those early times, very soon after the Revolution, the Indians were troublesome; not so much so on account of any hostile disposition, as from their strange manners and customs—a notable specimen of which was given at a certain time when several tribes had met in

the very neighborhood which constituted our little community. These were the Oneidas, Onondagas, and Tuscaroras, who had met at this place by the appointment of certain land speculators who had purchased of the Indians a tract somewhere in this region. They were here to receive their pay in specie, from the hands of one McMaster, the agent of the purchasing company.

“During their stay among us there was one continued scene, night and day, of yelling and confusion; powwows, fighting, rough-and-tumble, leaping, and shooting at a mark, with both arrows and guns—which constituted their sports. Their fires illuminated the woods during the night; around which several tribes agreeable to their own customs, slept or celebrated the warlike deeds of their ancestors, in their war songs and dances, which were accompanied with the indescribable gestures of Indian education and devotion called the “powwows.” And however wild and fantastic they may appear to the white man, yet to them those songs, dances, and terrifying attitudes are, and always have been, the solemn and only modes by which traditionary accounts of former ages—their origin, deeds of fame, mighty battles, conquering or conquered, and of their continuance on the earth, the earth’s origin, their belief in the Great Spirit—were handed down, from generation to generation, by impressing them on the minds of the young savage in this emphatic and never to be forgotten way.

"A company of these, having made free with ardent spirits procured of some of the families of the neighborhood, who had purchased it at Cooperstown for the occasion, came one evening to my father's house, with the view of getting whatever he might have to sell that was eatable. They had been in the room but a few minutes, when they fell to dancing after their manner; which was led on by a certain old squaw, who boasted much of being the mother of the great chief whom they called *Shinnawana*, or the Big Warrior, at the same time exposing her naked bosom, saying as she leaped here and there about the room: "Here me nourish Cornelius, great *Shinnawana*." Directly this big warrior, by way of demonstrating his prowess, knocked down an Indian of another tribe with his fist, called Schoharie John, which in a moment brought on a general fight. It seemed, however, as afterwards ascertained, that Schoharie John had said something highly offensive to the big warrior, which invited his vengeance in a particular manner. Accordingly the offending Indian had no sooner fallen than Shinnawana sprang upon him with both feet and fell to stamping him down with all his might. This act, together with the rest of the scuffle, broke the floor, sleepers and all, when the whole company rolled into the cellar, one undistinguished mass of yelling Indians. In the morning my mother asked the big warrior why he had so abused poor Schoharie

John, when he replied: 'Me make him feel my big power.' "

Mrs. Priest was early left a widow, the death of her husband being due to "a cold" contracted "in the rescue of several persons from drowning, in the time of high water." Later she took up an uncleared farm; but says the narrative:

"I soon caused a house of logs to be built, in the very midst of a dense forest of pines, which from a hundred directions might have fallen upon it had the winds been over furious. To remove this alarming exposure I had felled several acres which were immediately about the house, so that when this was done I was literally in the midst of an immense brush-heap. Out of this circumstance arose another difficulty, which had well nigh been more ruinous than the dreaded whirlwinds acting on the trees. The surrounding wilderness filled with the brushwood and leaves of a thousand autumns, dry as the scorched forests of the torrid zone, by some means had taken fire at several miles distance. The air was filled with a smoky haze, the sun travelled in blood, the stars were dimly seen. Very soon in the night the distant hills in various directions were seen flaming to their tops. Some places appeared to burn but feebly, while others poured forth flames as a great furnace. There the fire, on reaching a grove of withered pines, covered with pitch, at once darted to the clouds, in one long tissue of flame, till the pitch ex-

hausted, a chasm appeared ; here the streaming grandeur floated on the air as the mysterious light of the Aurora. At such a time, when the woods were burning in every direction, the only safety from ruin of all fences and all buildings was for the people of the neighborhood to run together, with axes, hoes, and rakes, and with these instruments remove the dry brush, leaves, etc., around their fields, or on the sides exposed to the current of the fire ; then to set what are called 'back-fires,' so that by the time the fire of the woods should come near, it was met by a counter current, and thus assuaged, amid sweat, alarm and exhaustion.

"Day and night the fire continued to make rapid progress. My fears now began to be alarmed lest sooner or later the woods which encompassed my house, as well as the several acres of dry, fallen trees immediately about it, would take fire, when nothing could save my dwelling from its fury. I was alone and at a distance from neighbors. It was impossible to procure aid, as all people were engaged to save their own fences and houses. The fire had reached the neighboring hills, raging before the wind like a tornado, trees falling with a dismal crash, the flames flying like meteors. I clearly saw my fate ; for the brush lay piled to the very eaves of my house, on all sides but the front. What could I do ? Must I flee and leave my all to the flames, and sink in one sad hour to ruin almost irreparable ? Suddenly in the midst of my trouble it struck my mind



that I would try *one* experiment, which would either be instantly fatal, or would save me; and this was to pull away the brush, where it came in contact with the house, and then set it on fire, calculating that it would naturally pursue the dry wood. This was my rescue; for in a moment it took fire and fled from the house every way, through the immensity of brush, farther and farther, roaring as it receded."

Apropos of the forest fire, the editor of Mrs. Priest's narrative introduces some interesting observations on what was perhaps the most important early industry:

"Perhaps no river of America abounds more in forests of pine than the Susquehanna, or of a superior quality, covering generally the mountain ranges from Otsego to the tide waters. But at the time of Mrs. Priest's settling of her new farm, these forests had not been broached by the axe of the raftsmen. Of this description of enterprise among the first settlers on that river, a history of no small magnitude might be written, as for many years the ambitious exertions of the most for accumulating property were directed to this pursuit. Were we capable of chivalric and comic description, there is not wanting incident in the history of rafting on the Susquehanna to furnish both subjects with an amplitude of matter, and we may add, even of a tragical character. It is said of the whalers of Nantucket and the fisheries of Maine, that however poor a young man be, if he is courageous and skilful in captur-

ing the whale he is sure of being held in high estimation by the ladies, and even those who are rich; while at the same time, if the sons of the opulent do not labor to acquire glory in this way, their gallantries are far from being acceptable with the fair arbiters of that seaboard. We believe we should not exceed the truth were we to say as much of the raftsmen of the Susquehanna and the Delaware, in the time of their first settlement. In all ages, the most dangerous pursuits of men have drawn forth the admiration, and even the love of women; this very propensity, however difficult to account for, has laid the foundation and given the spring to all extravagant achievement among men since the world began. The Susquehanna is a river exceedingly crooked, and in many places fearfully rapid, on which account in the first attempts to navigate or "run" it, as the raftsmen say, before its channels were better known, lives were often lost—by staving the rafts on the heads of islands, among flood-wood, or hidden trees fastened to the bottom; and in running the rapids, being driven ashore by the violence of the current in the short bends of the stream, and various other ways. On this account the importance of the pursuit was magnified, so as to fix on the man who had hardness of soul, courage, good judgment, a knowledge of the channel, and withall, was lucky, a complete veneration of both men and women; and though his character otherwise might not be the most inviting, yet such a



circumstance would be nearly overlooked on account of the all-absorbing qualification that he was a *first-rate steersman*. He could always command the highest price, and was sought after equally with a first-rate whaleman among the oil merchants whose wealth is derived from the sea on the coasts of Newfoundland and the north; as the value of a ten cribbed raft of pine boards was of equal importance to the owner with a ship to the East India Company—his *all* being often at stake in *one* such raft. During the course of this river, there are many dangerous places occasioned by its crookedness, its falls, its rapids, and its islands, where all the skill, strength and ingenuity of the steersman and from four to eight men are brought into action for many miles together. Not even the extreme vigilance of a ship pilot on the most dangerous coasts of the ocean, in a storm, is more needed to guide and save his vessel than are the exertions of a steersman of a raft on that river, as well as also on the Delaware. There is no class of human exertion, except the field of battle, which is capable of exciting more interest in the beholder than the deep fixed solicitude of a steersman and his hands while passing a dangerous rapid.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE TOWNSHIP ORGANIZED.

**A**T the time of its first settlement, Oneonta was in the old county of Tryon, which was formed from Albany county in 1772. Tryon county then embraced the whole western portion of the state, from a line extending north and south through the center of the present county of Schoharie, to Lake Erie. In 1784 the name was changed from Tryon to Montgomery. Oneonta was then in the old town of Suffrage.

During the period of which we have written, Oneonta as a distinct town had no existence. The village of Oneonta was then in the town of Milford, and was known as Milfordville. Through the brawl of two old bruisers, it was sometimes vulgarly called "Klipknocky." This nickname lasted a long while, and was known at a long distance from home.

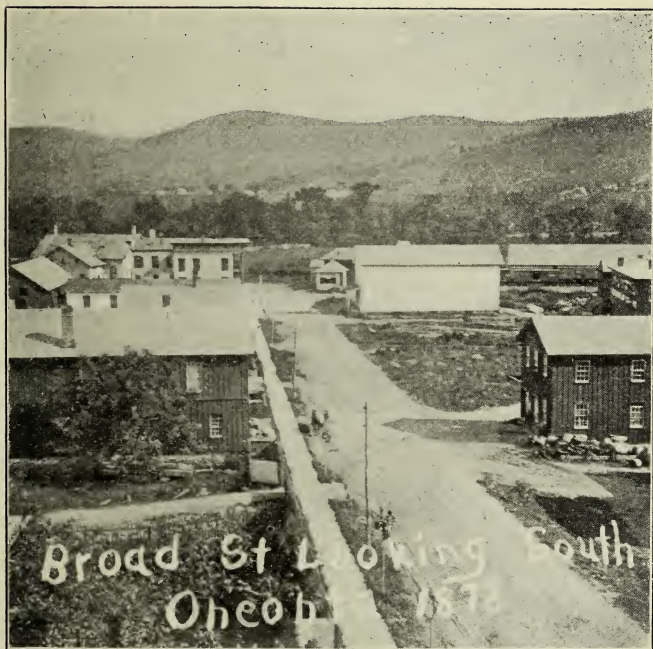
The act creating the town of Oneonta was passed by the legislature April 17, 1830, and read as follows:

SECT. 1. From and after the first Tuesday in March next, all that part of the town of Milford lying southwesterly of a line commencing on the line of the town of Laurens, at the southwest corner of great lot number fifty in the Otego patent, and running thence an easterly course along the southerly boundaries of said lot

number fifty, to the southeast corner thereof; thence a southerly course along the easterly boundaries of lot number fifty-one to the southeast corner thereof; thence an easterly course along the southerly boundaries of lot number fifty-seven to the southeast corner thereof; thence a southerly course along the easterly boundaries of lot number fifty-eight to the southeast corner thereof; thence a southeasterly course to the westerly corner of James Ferris' farm; thence along said Ferris southwest line to the Susquehanna river, and across and down the same to the northwest corner of lot number two in Fitch's patent; thence along the north line of said lot number two to the town line of the town of Maryland be annexed to the town of Otego.

SECT. 2. All that part of the town of Huntsville lying northeasterly of a line commencing on the line of the town of Franklin and at the southeasterly corner of lot number nineteen in Wallace's patent, and running from thence along the southeasterly boundaries of said lot, to the Susquehanna river, be also annexed to the town of Otego.

And all that part of the town of Otego lying southwesterly of a line commencing on the Susquehanna river at the southwest corner of John VanWoert's farm, and running along the southerly boundaries of said farm west twenty degrees, north sixty-five chains, to the northwest corner of said lot; thence north to the line of the town of Laurens, be annexed to the town of Huntsville.





And the said town of Huntsville, as altered by this act, shall hereafter be known by the name of Otego; and the said town of Otego, as hereby altered, shall hereafter be known by the name of Oneonta.

SECT. 3. The first town meeting, in said towns, shall be held on the first Tuesday in March next, at the following places, to-wit: In Milford at the house of William V. White, in Otego at the house of S. & G. Bundy, and in Oneonta at the house of William Angell.

In accordance with the act the first town meeting was held March 1, 1831, at the house of Thomas D. Alexander, who had succeeded Mr. Angell. The name of the town was given by Gen. Erastus Root of Delhi. Resolutions were passed and town officers elected as follows:

“At an annual town meeting held in the town of Oneonta at the house of Thomas D. Alexander, on the 1st day of March, 1831, present Eliakim R. Ford, Robert Cook, Justices in said town.

After the opening of the meeting by proclamation, it was resolved,

1st, That there be three assessors elected for said town.

2d, That there be four constables elected for said town.

3d, That there be four pound-masters chosen for said town.

4th, That an amount, equal to the sum which may be distributed to said town from the common school fund,



be raised by tax for the support of common schools in said town.

5th, That the sum of one dollar per day be allowed to the fence viewers of said town.

6th, That five per cent be allowed as the compensation to the collector, as his fees for collecting the taxes for said town.

7th, That all circular and partition fences, in said town, shall be at least four feet and six inches high.

8th, That widows, who have no land, shall be entitled to let their cattle run at large in the public highways, from the first of April to the first of December.

9th, That the annual town meeting shall be held on the first Thursday of March. The following officers were then elected for the town:

*Supervisor*—William Richardson.

*Town Clerk*—Adam Brown.

*Justices of the Peace*—John Dillingham, Jonah Northrup, John S. Yager.

*Assessors*—John VanWoert, John Fritts, John T. Quackenboss.

*Commissioners of Highways*—Isaac Shepherd, Asel Marvin, William Angel.

*Overseers of the Poor*—George W. Smith, Samuel Carpenter.

*Collector*—Hiram Shepherd.

*Constables*—Hiram Shepherd, David Sullivan, Emanuel Northrup, Robert S. Cook.

*Commissioners of Schools*—Obadiah Gifford, Peter Dietz, Joseph Walling.

*Inspectors of Schools*—Samuel H. Case, Washington Throop, Amos Cook.

*Sealer of Weights and Measures*—Eliakim R. Ford.

*Pound-Masters*—Beers Peet, Joseph Walling, William Dietz, Elisha Shepherd.

In 1835, five years after the organization of the town, the whole tax-paying population of Oneonta was 261. The grand total tax levy of the town was \$781.48. The amount of public school money raised by the town was \$100.45. William Angel was supervisor and David Sullivan collector for that year.

In 1860 the population of the village is put down as 678. The village was then described as containing three churches, a newspaper office, woolen factory, carriage factory, iron foundry, a grist mill, a tavern, saw mill, and distillery.

The growth of the village of Oneonta from 1840 to 1850 must have been very slow. The building of a house in those days was an act of no little importance. For ten years there were but few dwellings erected, and those few were of a cheap and inferior class. The population hardly kept pace with the building. The young went west, and the number of families that moved out was about equal to the number that moved in.

From 1850 to 1860 there was but little building and but a small increase in the population. There are no

accessible figures showing the population of the village at the different decades, but the census returns for the town may be taken as safe guides in forming an estimate of the village population at different periods. In 1830, when the town was organized, it contained a population of eleven hundred and forty-nine. In 1840 it had increased to nineteen hundred and thirty-six. In 1850 it had slightly decreased, then being nineteen hundred and two. In 1855 it was twenty-one hundred and sixty-seven. These are the figures for the town. If the village population had increased in the same ratio, it could not have been far from two hundred and fifty when the town was formed in 1830. It is hardly fair to infer that the village ratio of increase was quite equal to that of the town. The western emigration was made up more largely from the villages than from the farms. The same cause—lack of profitable employment—that has transferred the young men of New England from the plow to the manufacturing centers, transferred our young men from a place where no industry was encouraged, to remote but wider fields of usefulness.

The following named persons are known to have been resident voters of the town at this first annual election. If any poll-list was kept it cannot be found, and it is believed the names here given would nearly tally with the original poll-list:

John Tanner, Gilbert E. Campbell, Jonathan Brewer, John Fritts, George Scramling, Nathaniel Edmonds,

Seth White, Jeremiah T. Morenus, Martin Morenus, Wm. Morenus, Thomas Armitage, Frederick Bornt, Peter Yager, Solomon Yager, John S. Yager, David Yager, Isaac Peet, Solomon Peet, Beers Peet, Henry Gifford, Daniel Gifford, John Gifford, Peter Swart, William Swart, James Slade, Jacob Young, James Young, Robert Cook, John Dillingham, Jonah Northrup, John T. Quackenbush, George W. Smith, Samuel Carpenter, Ira Carpenter, Enoch Copley, Joseph Hodge, Samuel Richards, John Hackett, Christjohn Couse, Henry Couse, Tice Couse, Asa Emmons, Laurence Swart, Eliakim R. Ford, Wm. Livingston, Anthony Couse, Hontice Couse, David Ward, David Sullivan, Obediah Ward, Amasa Ward, Daniel Hodge, Wm. Ferguson, Menzo Ferguson, Stoughton Alger, Abraham Osterhout, Ira Emmons, Carlton Emmons, Jacob Vanness, Samuel Walling, John I. Couse, David T. Evans, Joseph Walling, Silvenus Smith, John Beams, Nicholas Beams, Wilhelmus Beams, James Lee, Jacob Morell, Daniel Morell, David Morell, David Kimball, Nicholas Kimball, John Kimball, Wm. Wolcott, David Alger, David Alger, Sr., Nicholas Alger, Elias Alger, John Blend, Michael Blend, Reuben Butler, Thomas Mantor, Abraham Blend, Elias Hillsinger, Daniel Crocker, Daniel Sullivan, Ezra Gates, Peter Dininey, Abram Houghtaling, Lewis Houghtaling, Hugh Houghtaling Wm. Richardson, Jacob Richardson, Morris Cooley, Wm. Cooley, Wm. Price, Ashael Marvin jr.,

Ashael Marvin sr., Elias Marvin, David Marvin, Joel Losee, David Whitmarsh, John Barnes, Abiatha Whitmarsh, Samuel Barnes, Wm. Barnes, David Babcock, Sanford Babcock, Nathan Babcock, Lewis Smith, Wm. Angel, Joseph W. Lindsay, Nathan Bennett, Err W. Bennett, Samuel H. Case, Edmund Meigs, Eseck Potter, John Potter, Michael Harney, Frederick Brown, Adam Brown, Jacob Brown, Jacob Dietz, Abraham Wolf, Isaac Wolf, Conrad Wolf, Asa Parish, Daniel Ward, David Ainsworth, John M. Watkins, Munson R. Watkins, Sylvester Ford, John VanWoert, Peter VanWoert, David Hawkins, Wm. Hackett, Elisha Shepherd, Elisha Shepherd jr., Ira Shepherd, Sanford Shepherd, Ezra Tolles, Isaac Shepherd, Wm. Fritts, Hiram Shepherd, Isaac Holmes, Nathaniel Niles, Alvin Strait, Daniel P. Strait, Johann Harsen, James McDonald, Mark McDonald, Leander McDonald, Peter W. Dietz, John McDonald, Stafford Potter, John Hackett, Obediah Gifford, Washington Throop, Amos Cook, Wm. Dietz, Eli Derby, Samuel Derby, Levi Brown, Rice Cooke, Wm. Wainwright, Egbert Scramling.

The larger part of the land was lease-hold property. Most of that portion now within the corporate limits of the village, and for some distance to the east and west of its boundaries, was divided into farms of one hundred acres each, the lines running nearly at right angles with the river and extending back on each side of the Susquehanna river so that a nearly equal divi-



sion of the river bottoms and the upland could be made among the settlers. Besides the Johnson patent (already alluded to), at the Plains, and below, the subdivision of the remainder of the town lying along the river are designated in old deeds by numbers "in Wallace Patent"—sometimes they are referred to as being in the Banyer patent. As the heirs of the original owner, or patentee, became of age, certain lots, designated by numbers, were offered for sale, when they were usually bought by the lease-holder. It had been for years the custom of the owner, or his representative, to grant what were known as life-leases. The lease might be for one, two or three lives. A lease for life ran during the lifetime of the lease-holder; but as most of the leases were for three lives, the names of three persons were mentioned during whose lives the lease was to continue. One of these names was of a very young person.

Besides the Johnson or Banyer patent included within the town limits, were also portions of the Otego or Burlington Township patent. Over the upland portion of these royal patents log roads extended, along which the great pines sawed into logs were hauled to the mill where they were converted into lumber which was piled up by the riverside, awaiting the spring freshets to raft them to the Baltimore market. No very scrupulous regard was shown respecting the ownership of the timber taken.

For a long period the mail was brought into the village by the carrier, who made a route from Cooperstown to Delhi. Dr. Joseph Lindsay held the contract for carrying this mail many years. When approaching a post village the carrier announced his coming by a long drawn-out blast upon the tin horn which he carried at his saddle-bow.

Previous to the organization of the town, most of the highways therein were merely slight improvements over the old log roads of the first settlers, but a new era appears to have dawned by the extension of the Charlotte Turnpike. An act, which in part was as follows, was passed by the legislature April 16, 1830, to effect this purpose:

Section 1.—Jacob Dietz, William Angel, Frederick A. Fenn, Samuel Stephens, and such other persons as may be associated with them, are hereby created a body corporate and politic, for the sole and only purpose of making a turnpike road and constructing a toll-bridge across the Susquehanna river, with a capital of twenty-five thousand dollars, to be divided into shares of twenty-five dollars each.

Sections 2 and 3 of the act provided for commissioners and prescribes their duties.

Section 4.—Such commissioners or any two of them, shall lay out said road on the most eligible route, proceeding from a point at or near Hotchkiss' mills in the town of Harpersfield, in the county of Delaware, by



Milfordville (Oneonta) meeting house, to Gilbertsville in the town of Butternuts, in the county of Otsego.

After its completion this road became a great highway from the Susquehanna to the Hudson river at Catskill, both for stages and teamsters. For many years nearly all the goods that came to country stores hereabouts and all the lumber that went from here to the Hudson were carried over this route. In after years the carting business from this part of the valley was transferred to Fort Plain, on the Mohawk. The Charlotte turnpike was also the road taken by cattle drivers from the west. It was not an unusual sight to see several droves of cattle, a thousand or more in a drove, from Ohio and Indiana, as also large flocks of sheep, pass through the town in one day during the summer season. A favorite stopping place for the drovers with their herds was at Emmons, where a well-managed hotel was kept for many years by Carlton Emmons.

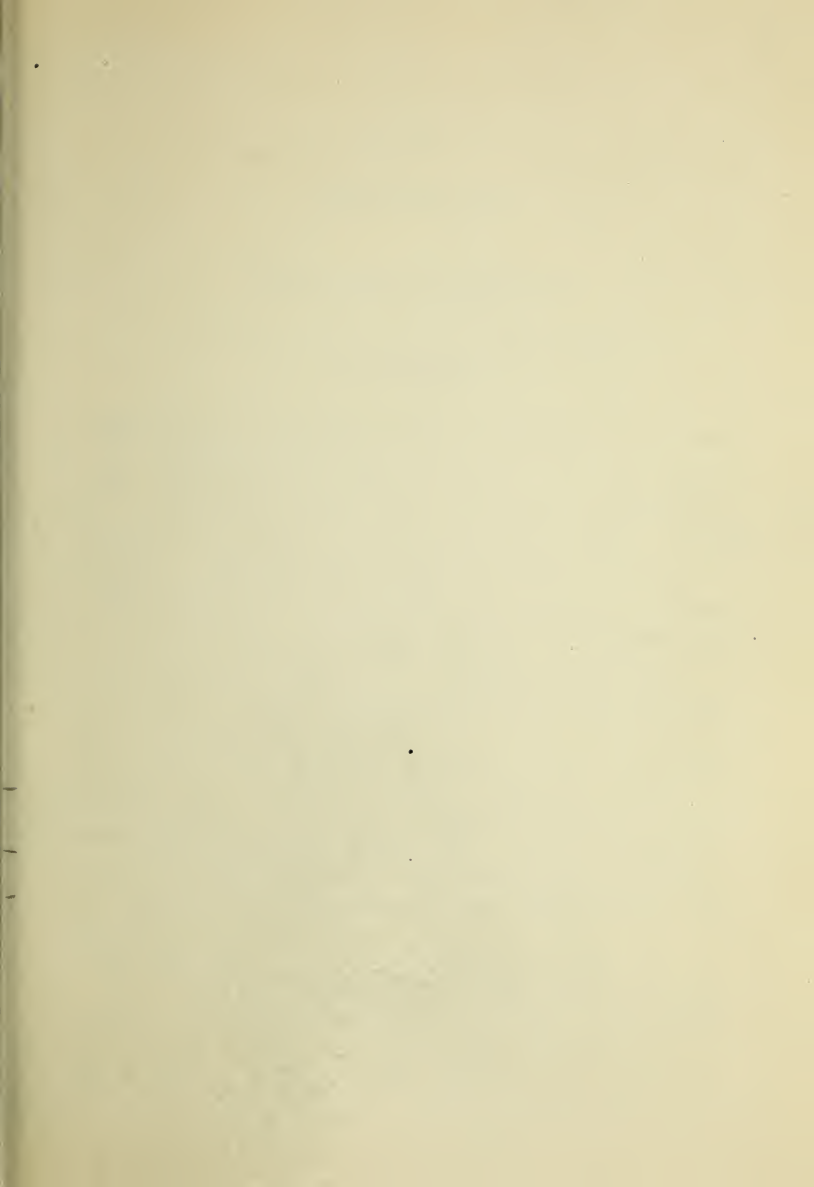
In 1853, the first effective measures were taken towards the construction of the Albany & Susquehanna railroad. The workers for the project suffered many defeats and much discouragement. The delay in the building was such that the road was not completed to Oneonta till the summer of 1865, and to Binghamton about two years later. In 1870 the railroad shops were located here. The first master mechanic in charge was John Primmer. The latter was succeeded by Charles A. Jones, Thomas Howard, Henry C. Smith,

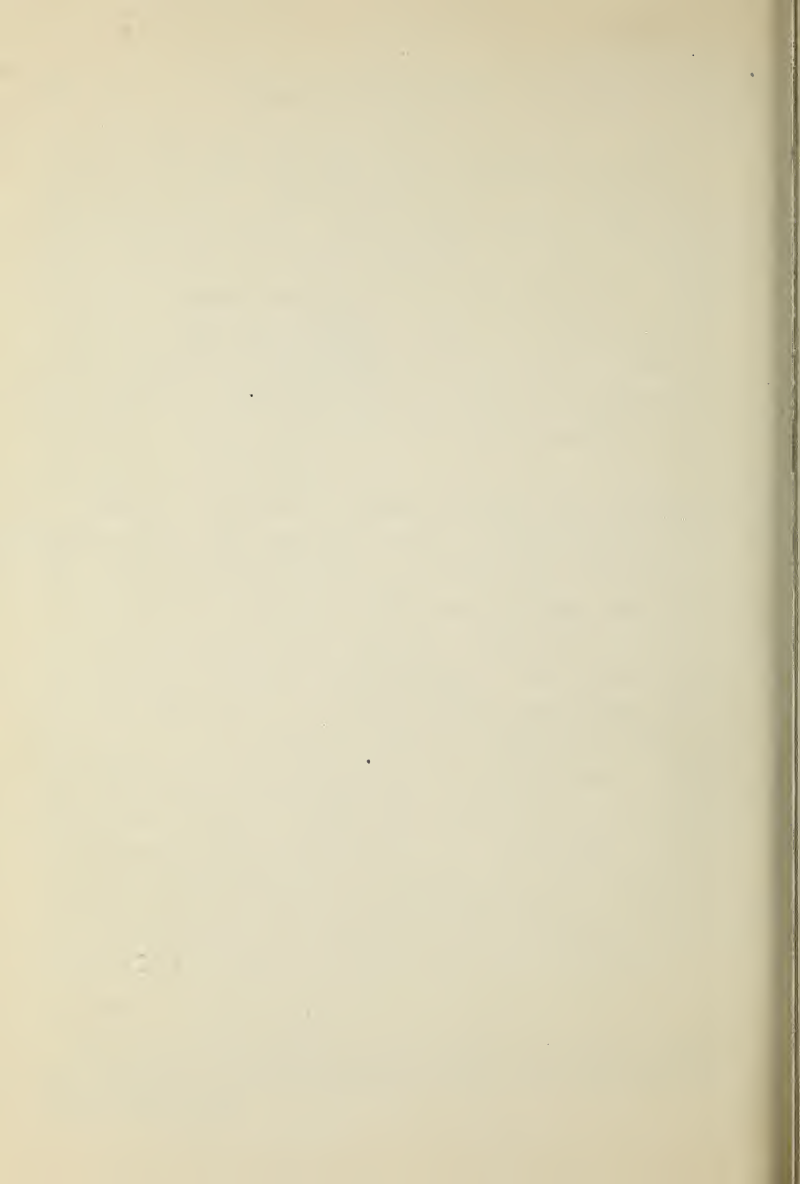
John R. Skinner, the last named holding the position for many years. His successor was W. C. Ennis, who took charge in 1904. The average number now paid here, both shopmen and trainmen, is 1200. The monthly payment to employes is about \$65,000. In February, 1902, the average number of men employed in the shops was 740, and the average monthly wages of the shopmen was \$22,000; of the engineers and firemen, \$15,500; making nearly \$40,000 paid monthly from the pay car at Oneonta.

Joseph H. Ramsey of Albany was the first president of the road, and continued to act in that capacity till the Albany & Susquehanna was leased for ninety-nine years\* to the Delaware & Hudson company, and was merged as a part of that system. John W. VanValkenburg was the first superintendent. The latter post is now held by D. F. Wait, whose immediate predecessors were A. J. Stone and C. D. Hammond, with J. H. Manning as superintendent of motive power. The first local directors of the road were Eliakim R. Ford of Oneonta, and Jared Goodyear of Colliersville. These men were pioneers in the projected road, and continued efficient workers in its behalf until the finish. At the present time George I. Wilber is the local director.

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\*The period of time—ninety-nine years—was adopted from the old English custom of leasing land for three lives, each of thirty-three years.





## CHAPTER VI.

### NEWSPAPERS AND SCHOOLS.

#### *Newspapers.*

THE first newspaper here of which we have any record was the Oneonta Gazette. It was started about 1842, and owing to ill health of the editor, William J. Knapp, it was discontinued after a brief career. The Oneonta Herald was first published in 1853 by Leman P. Carpenter, and was made a living success by hard and persistent work. Its publication was continued by Leman P. Carpenter alone, when in about 1868 it was purchased by George W. Reynolds, who was editor and proprietor for a few years, when it was purchased by Edward M. Johnson, who afterwards sold the plant to Willard E. Yager and George W. Fairchild, who became sole proprietors. It is now managed by G. W. Fairchild & Co.—Andrew B. Saxton and Carr W. Peck being associated with Mr. Fairchild in the business.

The Oneonta Press, established in 1876 by W. H. Jefferson, was the next in order of time. It has been successively under the management of Raymond & Smith, Coates & Weed, S. W. Ferernbaugh, and is now

under the management of Henry G. Bishop, who became proprietor in 1894.

The Oneonta Spy was first published by George W. Reynolds, who was succeeded by E. C. Reynolds, and in 1895 it was purchased by Albert D. Hitchcock, who continued its management until its recent discontinuance.

The Oneonta Daily Star was established in 1890 by Harry W. Lee. Several attempts had previously been made to publish a daily newspaper, but after a brief existence in each case the effort was abandoned. The Star is evidently an established success. Its increasing popularity has given it a strong hold both in this and adjoining towns. Thus we have two weeklies and one daily published here.

### *Normal School.*

By an act of the legislature, which became a law in 1887, a State Normal and Training School was established here. In that year an appropriation of \$45,000 was made by the State for the purpose of getting under way the work of erecting a building for the school. In 1888 an additional appropriation of \$69,000 was made. In 1890 the legislature made a further appropriation of \$40,000 for the purpose of grading the grounds and for equipping the school. September 4, 1889, the building was formally dedicated. A few days after the last date, the school was opened for in-



struction with James M. Milne, A. M., Ph. D., as principal, aided by an efficient staff of assistants. February 15, 1894, the school building with all its contents was destroyed by fire. The work of instruction was continued in various buildings about the village. Not a day of school work was lost, and of the four hundred pupils in attendance only one student withdrew from the school.

An insurance of \$75,000 on the burned building was immediately made available for erecting a new building, and March 8, 1894, less than one month from the date of the fire, the legislature appropriated \$100,000, to be applied towards the completion of the work. In 1895 an additional \$50,000 was voted for the same purpose, and the work of construction was so rapidly pushed to completion, that in the following October the different departments were transferred to the new Normal building.

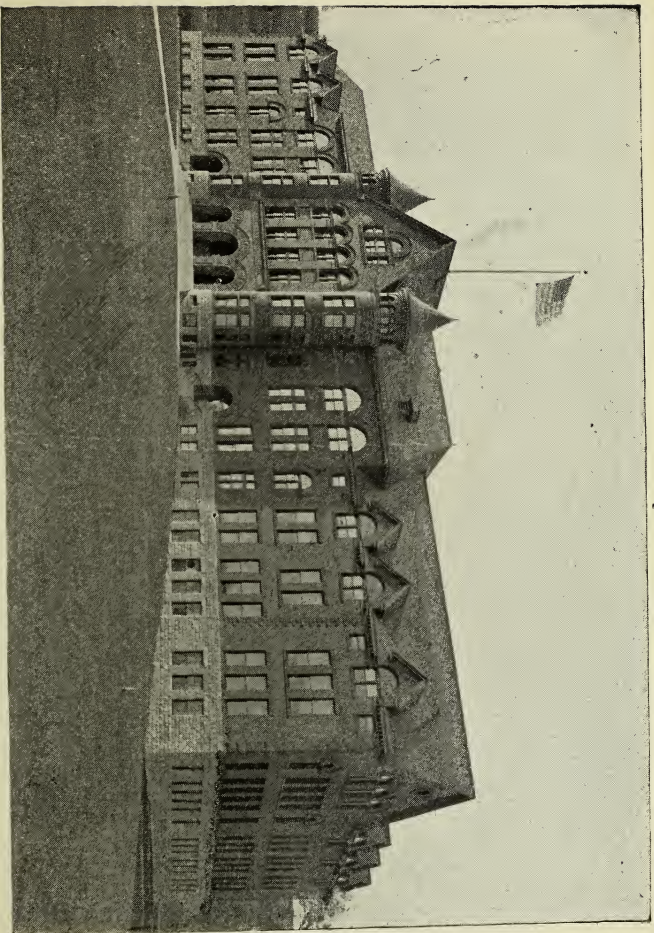
In 1898 Dr. Milne withdrew from the school, and Percy I. Bugbee, A. M., Ph. D., was appointed principal. The school has earned and still maintains a wide-spread reputation for its thorough course of instruction. During its comparatively brief existence its graduates have been in demand as teachers in all parts of the country.

The following is a complete list of the Local Board and Faculty for the year 1906:

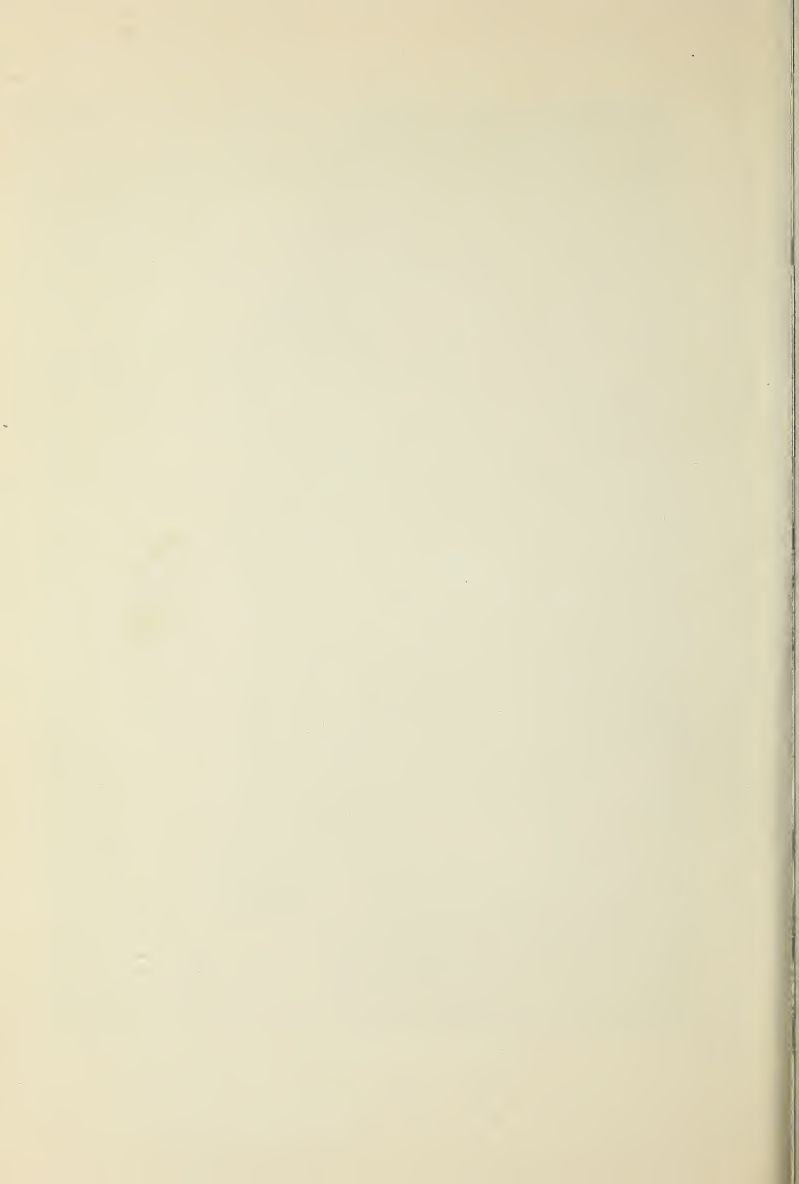
*Local Board:* William H. Morris, President; Henry

Bull, Secretary-Treasurer; Hon. James Stewart, Geo. I. Wilber, Willard E. Yager, George Kirkland, Hon. Walter L. Brown, Harry W. Lee, Eugene Raymond, Reuben Reynolds, Frederick A. Mead, Hon. Hobart Krum.

*Faculty*: Percy I. Bugbee, A. M., D. Sc., Principal, Didactics; Arthur M. Curtis, B. S., Mathematics; Edwin F. Bacon, Ph. B., Modern Languages; Frank D. Blodgett, A. B., A. M., Ancient Languages; Howard Lyon, A. B., M. S., Sciences; Charles A. Schumacher, A. B., Ph. D., English; Kate M. Denison, Methods; Mrs. Margaret H. Start, Music and Criticism; Mrs. Ella L. Colbath, Drawing and Criticism; John L. Dahl, B. S., Biology and Criticism; Winchie L. Collom, Reading, Expression and Criticism; Florence M. Matteson, Mathematics and Latin; Amelia E. Armbruster, Physical Training and Criticism; Blanche S. VanAuken, Manual Training; Eliza E. Gee, Principal of Intermediate Department; Cora H. Pettit, Principal of Primary Department; Helen G. Irving, Criticism and Model Teaching; Helen C. Fritts, Criticism and Model Teaching; Frances A. Terrill, Criticism and Model Teaching; Caroline D. Hurlbutt, Criticism and Model Teaching; Olive C. Freudenthal, Kindergarten; Caroline Telford Bockes, Secretary and Librarian.



State Normal School, Oneonta, N. Y.



*Public Schools.*

While the old-time "district" school in the outlying parts of the town, has maintained a struggling existence, the Union school, with its several departments, in the village has been established and is in a flourishing condition. This school, under its new organization, opened in 1868 with Wilber F. Saxton as principal. Mr. Saxton resigned his position in 1870, and was then succeeded by Nathaniel N. Bull. Large additions were subsequently made to the building on Academy street. In 1883, about six hundred pupils were in attendance and twelve teachers were employed, and an academic department was established.

Under the school law, Nathaniel N. Bull, A. M., who had served for many years as principal of the school, was made the first superintendent of the public schools, which position he held until 1895, when he was succeeded by William C. Franklin, A. M., who is now the superintendent. Under the reorganization Albert W. Abrams, A. M., was the first principal; his successor was R. S. Roulston, A. M., The present principal is Harry W. Rockwell, A. B., a recent graduate of Brown University.

The school is well known for its excellent educational work, the total registration during the past year being about 1200. It occupies three buildings. Besides the capacious structure on Academy street, there are two commodious and well arranged school buildings, one on



River street and one on Center street. The principal of the former is Luella Huntington, and of the latter Linda V. Mead. There is not another village between Albany and Binghamton having equal educational advantages.

As supplemental to the school facilities, the village has a public library of several thousand well selected books.

The following is a complete list of the Board of Education and Faculty for the year 1906:

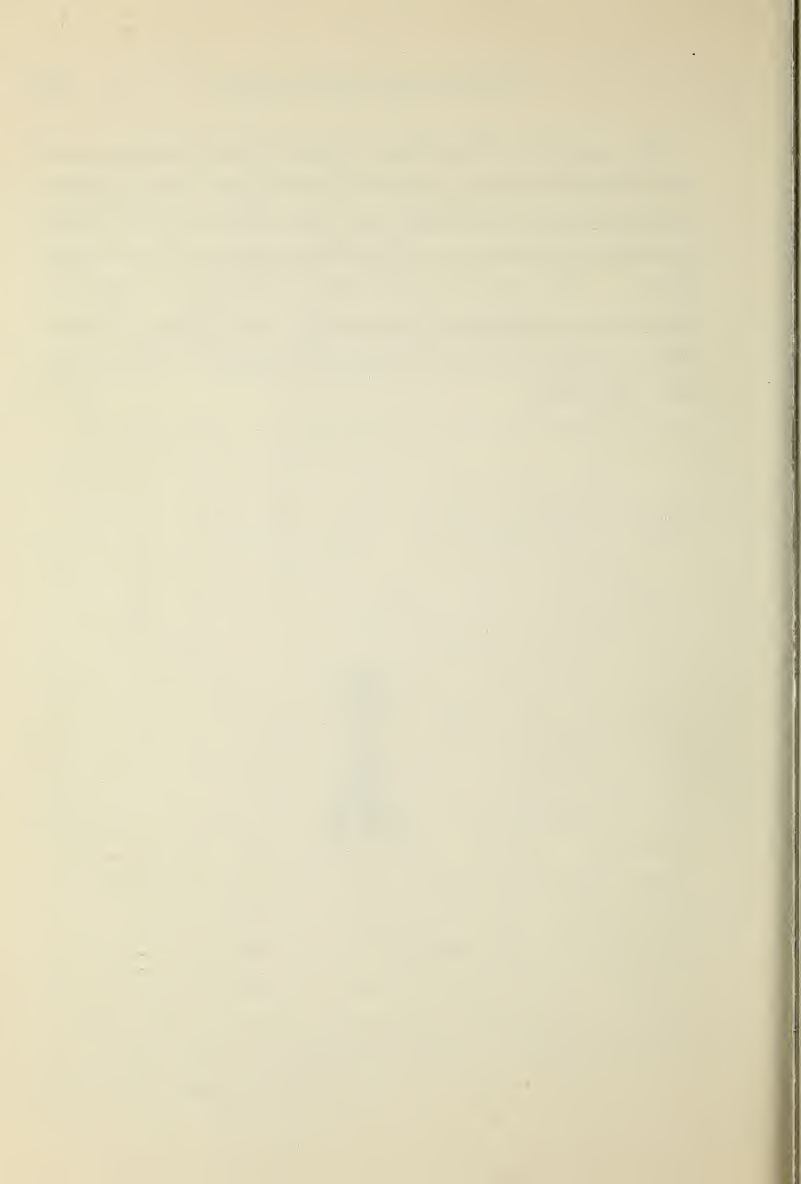
*Board of Education:* Albert Morris, President; M. G. Keenan, Secretary; William Edmunds, Henry Bull, Henry Saunders, Arthur E. Ford, John R. Skinner.

*Faculty:* William C. Franklin, M. A., Superintendent of Schools. Academy Street School, High School Department: Harry W. Rockwell, Principal; Ella M. Briggs, Vice-Principal; Flora K. Allen, Bertha Vischer, E. Estelle Southwell, Harriet E. Stevens, Alice E. Latten, Inez Bates. Preparatory Department: Emma Bates, Frances L. Kellogg, Dorothy Wilber, Myrtle McKinney, Nellie Alcott. Intermediate and Primary Department: Winifred Brown, Anna Bunn. Center Street School: Linda V. Mead, Principal; Flora Shearer, Mary Brainard, Ellen Hitchcock, Clara Bunn, Jennie M. Green, Jessie Traber. River Street School: Luella Huntington, Principal; Mary Ward, Mila Frasier, Elizabeth Ward. Rispah Potter, Special Teacher of Music.



The school at East End employs four teachers, and should be, but is not, a part of the village school system. Among recent principals have been Edward E. Beals, Charles A. Butler, H. B. Goodenough, and Andrew Sloan. The present principal is Edward P. Saxton. The other members of the faculty are Misses Hannah Hayes, Grace Platt and Minnie Brainerd. The school has 125 pupils.





## CHAPTER VII.

### STORIES OF THE OLDER INHABITANTS.

UNCLE Mose was naturally comical and sarcastic. A baptismal ceremony was taking place below the Main street bridge and an eccentric clam peddler was being dipped. As the clergyman raised the convert out of the water, Mose, who occupied an elevated view on the bridge above the assembled multitude, cried out, "Dip him again, elder, he always was a dirty old sinner!"

Dexter B. was a local exhorter of no little repute. One Sabbath morning he was driving by General B's office seated on a buckboard wagon. The General saluted the exhorter with the remark, "Quite a wagon you got there, elder." The latter replied, "Just the thing to carry the gospel over the hills."

This same exhorter was well known for his quaintness of speech in his pulpit discourses. He was conducting services one Sabbath in an outlying rural church. He referred to the passage of the children of Israel through the Red sea in the following words: "The children of Israel came up to the seashore when the waves parted, and they went through dry-shod. Old Pharaoh came up with his horses and chariot, all glittering in gold, and he said, 'if those poor devils can go through in that way,

surely I, the king of Egypt, can do it too.' He drove in, when the Almighty sent a big wave against him which knocked the linchpin out of his old cart and down he went."

Old Betsy's C's husband had wrestled with a hard case of typhoid fever during which he had been attended by Dr. Lindsay. He was on the road to recovery when Betsy had occasion one day to leave him alone in the little log house on the hillside and make a trip down to the village. She had left a panful of pot-liquor and bread crumbs on the shelf. He got to the pan and could not satisfy his appetite until he had cleaned the dish of its contents. The result of his feasting was the closing of his mortal career. Some time after his death Betsy went to the doctor's house, and after taking a razor from its paper wrapping, she displayed the blade and said, "I wish I had Lon back here again as bright as this razor. Its all I've got, doctor, to pay you with. You got him most well, doctor, and he eat that panfull of pot-liquor and bread, and died, the d——d fool!"

Old Nicholas Z. was an eccentric character. It was customary, whenever a barn raising occurred, to have on hand a plentiful supply of whiskey. Nicholas attended one of these neighborhood gatherings when the jug was passed around. He preceded his swig with a toast. Holding the jug near his mouth, he said, "De goot book do say dis am de worst enemy of mankind, but de goot book do say also, you must love your enemy

de same as you do yourself, and how much I do love dis!"—and down went a big draught.

One of the old root doctors was telling of the earlier treatment of diphtheria. He said the practice had been to fasten a sponge on the end of a wire, saturate the sponge with ammonia and thrust it down the throat. When asked if they inserted the sponge below the larynx, he said, "Why of course, they run it down way below the larnix."

Old John Van said he never could eat rye bread, "but when they began to make rye into whiskey, I could worry down a good deal of it."

After old Nicholas had got into full fellowship in his church his minister made him a pastoral visit. After dinner they took a stroll over the farm. The minister remarked that from the appearance of things he thought the Lord had been with him. Nicholas replied, "I ain't seen nothing of him around here, but he may have been on the mountin up there."

One of the old pioneers was one day hauling hay from a steep hillside to the barn. Almost every load would tip over. A happy thought struck him. The rear wheels of his wagon being much larger than the front ones, to level up when loading, he put both the wheels on the lower side. He congratulated himself upon the discovery of a great scientific principle, but he turned to go back to the barn. Both small wheels were on the lower side, and over went the hay again.

Dr. Evans, one day observing a thick-headed fellow trying to train a collie dog, said to him: "A man to train a dog well ought to know more than the dog does."

During the campaign of 1844 the Whigs were raising a pole on Main street near Grove, when John Evans, who prided himself on his smart tricks, came along on a horse with a bag of cornmeal from the mill. He yelled out a derisive remark regarding his political opponents, at the same time tossing the bag of meal over his shoulder with the string end to the rear, and started his horse at a brisk gallop. The bag string broke, and his course along Main street was traceable by a long yellow trail in the black mud of the street. He made all possible haste to get away from the shouts of the crowd, and reached home without any grist.

An eccentric old-time character was Hugh Hough-tailing, who traded his wife for a shot-gun, and who afterwards found consolation in the fact that the gun was not a worse "kicker" than his wife had been.

An old gentleman by the name of Moon, and his son, both of whom had imbibed too freely of intoxicants, were met one day by Dr. Lindsay, who remarked that he had never before seen the old moon and the new moon both *full* at the same time.

Samuel B. Beach, who had been a clerk in the general post-office at Washington most of his lifetime, came to Oneonta to reside and took rooms at the old Susquehanna house. He brought a load of nicely split, long



wood of David Alger because it looked so good. A few days afterwards, he said to Alger, "If I had another load I could put all h—l out." It was green poplar wood.

The Rev. Mr. W. was particular to insist on final *ed* of words. He closed one of his sermons in the following words: "I tell you, my brethren and sisters, that in this world man is very liable to be deceiv-*ed* and most wofully suck-*ed* in."

At a former period in Oneonta, there were at least three medical practitioners who styled themselves M. D.'s by virtue of a diploma they had bought from a peddler at the price of \$5.00 each. On the proof of a will at Delhi they were called as expert witnesses. They furnished the lawyers in the case an opportunity to give them a good roasting; the other witnesses were exhorters or quack preachers. The Rev. Mr. B—, heretofore referred to, was asked the question, "What conversation took place between you and the deceased?" In a very solemn tone he replied, "I said, 'sister Gregory, you are about to go on a long journey. Are you all packed up.'"

Of one of the quack physicians, Dr. Boyce, regular physician, related the following incident: "Dr. Reynolds wanted to go into partnership with me in the practice of medicine. I said, 'Dr. you are a very good man, that is to say, but you are most wofully *deficient in lore*, that is to say.' " When relating to this conversation Dr. Boyce's manner was very dramatic.

One of the principal men of this region fifty years ago was Peter Brink, who frequently entertained his neighbors by giving dances, or "breakdowns," as he called them. Pete fiddled and furnished the music and "called off." The spring of 1857 was made memorable by a great snowstorm, which set in on April 14, and continued with brief let-ups for a week. The ground was covered throughout the upper Susquehanna country with an average depth of four feet of snow. Forage for stock became very scarce. Hay was sold at \$40 a ton and rye straw at two shillings a bundle. It was a difficult matter to get either of these necessities, even at such prices. After the highways had been made passable, old Pete hit upon a happy way of getting a supply of forage for his stock. He announced that he would give one of his popular entertainments, and that each man that attended should bring a bundle of straw instead of paying the usual fee of two shillings. When the night of the dance came around Pete had thoroughly rosined the bow and was vigorously scraping away when the first comer knocked at the door, a bundle of straw under one arm and a "gal" under the other. He showed his bundle, saying, "Here, Pete, is your straw." Pete had built a large pen of fence rails to receive the straw. As each male guest produced his bundle at the door Pete shouted "all right, put it in the pen." Pete was doing his best, having in thought the big stock of straw that would greet his eyes in the morn-

ing. His calls of "lemonade all and "sassafras across the floor" were prompt and vigorous. The night wore away. So did two gallons of whiskey and one quart of molasses. After the last dancer had gone, Pete went out to his straw pen. There he saw only one bundle of straw. After the first, each succeeding guest had taken the same bundle and presented it at the door. Verily, the jig was up!





## CHAPTER VIII.

### EARLY SETTLERS OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE.

CALVIN EATON, one of the first settlers about West Oneonta, settled on the farm now owned by Isaac Holmes. He came from Wyoming, Pa., date uncertain. He was a famous story-teller. Many of his stories have been preserved by tradition, and are now told in the neighborhood with great zest. His wife, familiarly known as Aunt Olive Eaton, died about 1844 or 1845, at a very advanced age, he having died many years before. They brought up several of their nephews and nieces, having no children of their own, William Holmes, father of Isaac Holmes, being one of them.

Elder Emanuel Northrup, a Baptist minister, settled on the farm now owned by his grandson, Isaac Northrup, about 1794. He came originally, it is believed, from Rhode Island. He had lived in Connecticut, but came last from Stephentown, Rensselaer county. His son, Josiah Northrup, who was afterwards a justice of the peace for many years, having been elected at the first town meeting, a prominent man in town affairs, and a leading member of the Baptist church, was, at the time of his father's coming, about fourteen years of age; he died in 1844.

The farm now occupied by the Niles family was settled by Abner Mack, a Rhode Island man. He sold a part of his possession, what is now the Niles farm, in 1797, to Nathaniel Niles; there were two of the name, father and son, the father being the purchaser. He was at that time about seventy years of age; he brought with him some apple seeds, planted a nursery, raised trees, set out an orchard, and lived to drink cider made from the apples. The orchard became quite famous in the neighborhood, and was known to all the boys for miles around. Upon the death of the father, his son, Nathaniel Niles, who had occupied the farm with his father, became the owner, who lived upon the farm until his death in 1852, at eighty-seven years of age.

Franklin Strait, another of the early settlers, came from Rhode Island in 1797; he brought his family, and drove an ox team. He first settled on the farm now owned by Enos Thayer, where he lived until 1808, when he exchanged his farm with Asa Thayer, another of the early comers, for the property at West Oneonta where the hotel now stands. He enlarged the house that then stood upon the ground, took out a license, and opened "Strait's Tavern," on the Oxford turnpike, one of the old landmarks for many years; he died in 1822, Before this property had come into the possession of Thayer, it had been occupied by Daniel Lawrence, father of Lewis Lawrence, of Utica, and where Lewis Lawrence was born.



Robert Cook settled early upon the farm formerly owned by Hammond Cook. At the time of his coming the Indians were yet frequent visitors. One day, as the story goes, Cook was at work in the field, his wife being alone in the house, an Indian called, and finding her alone, brandished his knife, and made some terrible threats, frightening her almost to death. Just at this time Cook appeared; the Indian took his departure precipitately. Cook seized his gun and pursued him. He returned after a little time, and the Indian never troubled them more.

The place where Daniel Hodge now lives was first occupied by Samuel Stephen. His father, John Stephen, made a settlement at Laurens before the Revolutionary war.

The Sleepers were from near Burlington, New Jersey. During the war they became alarmed at the inroads of the Tories and Indians, and returned to New Jersey. On their way back, they passed through Cherry Valley the day before the massacre. They returned to the settlement after the war. John Sleeper had several sons. One, Nehemiah Sleeper, built a mill below Laurens on the Otego creek, which was afterwards known as Boyd's mill. Samuel Sleeper took up several hundred acres of land, of which the farms of Daniel Hodge and Horace White formed a part. He built a grist-mill and saw-mill on the Otego creek, just below the iron bridge this side (east) of West Oneonta. He

was said to have been an active business man, and was quite a noted surveyor. He sold his property, after some years to one David Smith, and went to Stroudsburg, Pa., and thence to Ohio. His oldest son, Ephraim Sleeper, married Jane Niles, daughter of Nathaniel Niles, and remained in the neighborhood. The latter died many years ago at West Oneonta at an advanced age.

Other persons are mentioned by the old residents as being among the early settlers. Samuel Green occupied a part of the farm formerly owned by Joseph Bull. A man named Tichnor another part of the same farm. One Ogden lived where Joseph Taber now lives, about whom a few stories are current in the neighborhood. At one time a company of Indians was encamped at the mouth of the Otego creek engaged in making baskets and trinkets of various kinds. Ogden visited them for the purpose of getting a pair of silver shoe buckles made by an Indian who was skilled in the art. It so happened that he had not silver enough to make the buckles. Two or three of the Indians left suddenly, and after having been absent a short time, returned, bringing a handful of silver. Ogden inferred from this that there must be a silver mine not far away, but he was never able to find it. A deer often came around his house; he shot at it repeatedly, but was unable to hit it. An old woman lived not far away, who was called a witch; he finally suspected that she had something to do with



Looking West From  
Silver Creek, Ontario 1873



the deer; \*he procured a silver bullet, which he put in his gun, and next time the deer appeared he fired at it, wounding it badly, but it escaped; he soon learned however, that the old woman was badly hurt.\*\*

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\*The same story is told of other hunters and other witches.

\*\*The author is indebted to Mr. N. N. Bull for the sketch relating to West Oneonta.





## CHAPTER IX.

### RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN ONEONTA.

THE first church organization in town was effected by the Presbyterians. The first meeting was held at the house of Frederick Brown, January 24, 1800, when John Houghtailing, Henry Scramling, John VanDerWerker, and James Dietz were chosen elders; William Morenus, David Scramling, Aaron Barnes, and James Quackenbush were chosen deacons. The following are the names of the ministers of the church with dates of service: Wm. Fisher, 1823-33; Wm. Clark, 1833-37; Jos. W. Paddock, 1837-42; Fordyce Harrington, 1843-45; Gaius M. Blodgett, 1845— (Reorganization); Eliphalet M. Spencer, 1849-52; Wm. B. Christopher, 1852-54; Wm. Baldwin, 1854-62; Geo. O. Phelps, 1863-69; H. H. Allen, 1869-87; Charles G. Matteson, 1887-88; John H. Brandow, 1888-94; Newton M. Hall, 1895-99; J. C. Russell, D. D., 1899—

The next church organization was by the Methodist Episcopalals. The first steps towards forming the society were taken by Nathan Bennett, Silas Washburn, David T. Evans, David Fairchild, and David T. Clark. This society had no house of worship for many years, and held their meetings in the village school house. The first church edifice was built in 1844. In 1868-9

a new and larger meeting house was built and finished at a cost of \$12,000. Rev. George Elliott and Rev. Wm. McDonald were the first preachers. Subsequent ministers have been: Rev. C. G. Robinson, 1854-56; Rev. W. G. Queal, 1856-58; Rev. S. M. Stone, 1858-59; Rev. D. L. Pendell, 1859-61; Rev. Geo. Parsons, 1861-63; Rev. P. Y. Hughston, 1863-65; Rev. H. N. VanDusen, 1865-67; Rev. R. W. Peebles, 1867-70; Rev. Austin Griffin, 1870-72; Rev. I. N. Pardee, 1872-75; Rev. W. B. Westlake, 1875-78; Rev. Y. Z. Smith, 1878-79; Rev. A. B. Richardson, 1879-82; Rev. D. C. Olmstead, 1882-85; Rev. A. B. Richardson, 1885-88; Rev. O. H. McAnulty, 1888-93; Rev. John E. Paine, 1893-96; Rev. H. E. McDermott, 1896-01; Rev. John B. Sweet, 1901-02; Rev. Henry Tuckley, 1902-05; Rev. John H. Bickford, 1905—

The presiding elders in charge here have been: Rev. Wm. N. Cobb, 1869-72; Rev. Henry Wheeler, 1873-75; Rev. H. R. Clark, 1876-79; Rev. F. L. Hillis, 1880-83; Rev. J. N. Lee, 1884-87; Rev. Wm. H. Olin, 1888-89; Rev. T. P. Halstead, 1889-91; Rev. A. J. VanCleft, 1891-96; Rev. Austin Griffin, 1897-98; Rev. Truman F. Hall, 1898-03; Rev. Austin Griffin, 1903—.

The First Baptist society was organized April 6, 1833. At a meeting called for that purpose, David Yager was chosen moderator and James Slade clerk. April 24, 1833, a council was held, of which Elder Alex. Smith, of Franklin, was moderator, and Elder King-

sley, of Meredith, clerk. The pastors have been Rev. D. B. Crane, 1833-35; Rev. John Smith, 1836-48; Rev. H. Clark, 1848-49; Rev. A. B. Earle, 1849-53; Rev. E. Westcott, 1854-57; Rev. John Smith, 1858-65; Rev. A. Reynolds, 1865-70; Rev. Geo. R. Burnside, 1871-74; Rev. H. Brotherton, 1874-80; Rev. P. D. Root, 1880-82; Rev. E. D. Clough, 1883-86; Rev. A. B. Coats, 1886-91; Rev. C. C. Pierce, 1891-96; Rev. E. J. Farley, 1896—.

The Free Baptist Church society was formed at the Emmons school house Feb. 25, 1856.\* The council consisted of Revs. A. Wing, D. Green, O. T. Moulton, and laymen Joseph Jenks and Harvey Mackey. The meeting house was built in 1857. The pastors have been Rev. O. T. Moulton, 1856-61; Rev. H. Strickland, 1862; Rev. E. Crowel, 1864-68; Rev. G. P. Ramsey, 1868-72; Rev. O. T. Moulton, 1872-75; Rev. Peter Scramling, 1875; Rev. M. C. Brown, 1875-78; Rev. D. C. Wheeler, 1878; Rev. David Boyd, 1880-83; Rev. C. A. Gleason, 1883-87; Rev. A. E. Wilson, 1887-96; Rev. Charles S. Pendleton, 1896—.

The first Episcopal services were held in 1839, by the Rev. Andrew Hall, a missionary to Oneonta. At first the society met in the school-house of the village, and afterwards built a chapel on the lot now occupied by a part of the Central Hotel. The clergy have been

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\*A Free Baptist church had been built at the Plains many years before.

as follows: Rev. Andrew Hall, 1839; Rev. Stephen Parker, 1855; Rev. D. S. Tuttle, 1864-65; Rev. E. N. Goddard, 1865; Rev. Mr. Foote, and Rev. Mr. Ferguson, 1866-67; Rev. Mr. Lighthipe, 1870; Rev. Mr. Fitzgerald, 1873-74; Rev. J. H. Smith, 1874; Rev. J. B. Colhoun, 1875-78; Rev. J. B. Hubbs, 1880-81; Rev. C. D. Flagler, 1882-85; Rev. Daniel Duroe, 1885-89; Rev. E. A. Hartman, 1889-92; Rev. J. E. Bold, 1892-1900; Rev. T. G. M'Gonigle, 1900-04; Rev. J. R. Lacey, 1904—.

The "First Universalist Society" of Oneonta was formed Dec. 12, 1877. The meeting house was built in 1878-79. The pastors have been Rev. L. F. Porter, 1877-81; Rev. H. Kirk White, 1882-84; Rev. B. Branning, 1884-85; Rev. E. F. Temple, 1885-89; Rev. J. C. F. Grumbine, 1889; Rev. Charles E. Hall, 1889-90; Rev. W. L. Stone, 1891-92; Rev. E. F. Temple, 1892-95; Rev. L. L. Greene, 1896-1903; Rev. G. E. Huntley, 1903-05; Rev. W. D. Potter, 1905—.

Through the efforts of H. D. Nelson, A. R. Gibbs and Charles L. Wilbur, the United Presbyterian Church was organized May 5, 1889, when the first services were held under the ministration of Rev. J. R. Frazier, and five persons were received into membership, viz: James Dougherty, Elizabeth Dougherty, Benjamin Tiffany, Mrs. H. D. Nelson, Sarah Stranahan, and since the first ministrations of Rev. Mr. Frazier, the following pastors have been in charge: Rev. Leslie E. Hawk,

1889-94; Rev. Robert L. Welch, 1894-1901; Rev. Thos. F. B. Smith, 1901-05. The society has erected a fine church edifice on Dietz street, and is steadily increasing in membership.

The Evangelical Lutheran church was organized in Oneonta in May, 1903. Rev. Henry Manken was called to the pastorate, and the society now owns the former Baptist church on Grove street, where the meetings are regularly held.

The First Church of Christ, Scientist, was organized April 11, 1894, with fourteen charter members. In connection with its place of meeting it has a well supplied reading room which is open every week day from 2 to 5 p. m.

Catholic services were conducted in Oneonta by Rev. J. J. Brosnahan, of Cobleskill, till July, 1883, when the Bishop created a new parish at this place and appointed Rev. J. H. Maney (of St. Mary's Church, Albany), its pastor. The society, which took the name of St. Mary's, erected a handsome church edifice in 1884, upon the south-east corner of Main and Grand streets. Father Maney was succeeded as resident pastor by Rev. D. E. Murphy in August, 1892. The latter spent over twelve years in the service of St. Mary's church, devoting himself with the utmost self-denial to its interests. Under his pastorate the membership was largely increased, and it now numbers about 500 souls. Father Murphy died in November, 1904, and was succeeded

in June, 1905, by Rev. John McCarthy, the present incumbent.

Besides the churches in the village of Oneonta, there were also four other church organizations in town—a Methodist Episcopal church at the Plains, forming one charge with the church at Laurens, and two churches at West Oneonta, a First Baptist and a Free Baptist society. Both are prosperous churches of good membership, with settled pastors. The fourth church, Methodist Episcopal, is near the upper reservoir, on the Oneonta creek. Rev. Henry R. Gifford has for many years been its pastor.









## CHAPTER X.

### ONEONTA SIXTY YEARS AGO AND NOW.

**I**N 1845 there were four streets, a number of alleys and cul-de-sacs. Main, Chestnut, Maple and River were the principal streets. Grove street extended from Main to Academy and thence the way led to Chestnut. Church street extended from Chestnut to a barnyard near Franklin street, and High extended about half way to West street. On High street there were several dwellings, and on Church there were two.

From a point where Otsego street now is, on Main street, to the end of the trolley line, there were only four dwellings, while to the north and south of Main street within this section five farms are now occupied by streets and residences.

On Maple street there were three dwelling houses, while on either side of this street are now parallel and cross streets, with but few vacant lots.

Taking as an example the most busy portion of Main street at that time, beginning at Broad, on the south side there was the old Ford stone store, a wagon shop, a cooper shop, an old weather-beaten blacksmith shop, sided with rough boards running up and down in primitive barn style, then south there were two one-story

business buildings, one residence, then the Huntington stone store, so many years occupied by the Mendel Brothers, and still owned by them; next the Fritts stone building between the last named and the present viaduct.

There was not even a well-graveled sidewalk, in many places a board or slab being thrown down to guide the foot-passenger over a mud hole.

Commencing at a point nearly opposite Dietz street there was a narrow and winding way—and many there were that walked therein—down under the hill that led to the distillery near Broad street.

On Chestnut street there were four pretentious residences, while most of the houses were mere rookeries. From Academy street to West there were six dwelling houses on both sides of the street, with no outlying streets. Since that time many farms have been cut up into streets and building lots, where well-kept dwellings and well-flagged sidewalks could be measured by miles in every direction.

Well-paved streets have taken the place of the muddy roadbeds in the principal business portion of the village; the streets are lighted by electricity, and telephone and telegraph communication has been established in every portion of the town, as well as with the outside world. Trolley cars traverse the main streets and the trolley line makes Cooperstown, Richfield Springs and the Mohawk valley easily accessible. The Ulster &

Delaware railroad connects with Kingston and New York city, while the Delaware & Hudson railroad makes Binghamton and Carbondale to the south, and Albany and Schenectady to the east within a few hours' travel. An extension of the trolley line is also projected to the Hudson river at Catskill.

The main impetus to the growth of the village was given by the establishment of the railroad machine shops here, which are being enlarged every year, requiring an increased force of employes and a vast outlay of money.

The Oneonta Milling company was established here in 1896 by the Pruyn Milling and Power Company. The present company employs a large force of help, working night and day. The capacity of the plant is now one thousand barrels of rye and buckwheat flour, and three hundred tons of feed every twenty-four hours. The storage capacity is one hundred thousand bushels of grain or one hundred cars, and five hundred and fifty cars sacked mill feeds. This company's output is shipped to all parts of the United States. The large grain elevators and warehouses of Morris Brothers and of Ford & Rowe are also busy centers in this line of trade.

The coldstorage warehouse of Swift & Co., of Chicago, is an important addition to the business of the village.

The Wilber National Bank, whose first president

was Hon. David Wilber, and the First National Bank, whose first president was Hon. John Cope, have a large clientage, including many neighboring villages and a wide extent of surrounding country.

The wholesale and retail stores in all lines of trade are liberally patronized by large sections of the adjacent country.

There are eight well-built church edifices and a Christian Science church.

The water supply of Oneonta is from a large mountain reservoir about three miles north of the village. The sources of this reservoir are numerous large springs which furnish an abundant supply of pure water, which is carried through all the streets for ordinary household purposes, and which supplies a thoroughly drilled and well-equipped fire department with the means to cope with any fires that may occur.

The Fox Memorial Hospital, which was presented to the village through the generosity of Colonel Reuben L. Fox of New York city, was opened for public service in 1900. It is a fine structure and of wide-spread usefulness, not only to this immediate vicinity but to all the surrounding country. The liberality of the people has added largely to the efficiency of the institution.

Through the munificence of the state, an armory has been established here which has recently been opened for the occupancy of our local state militia. This company was called into active service during the Spanish-



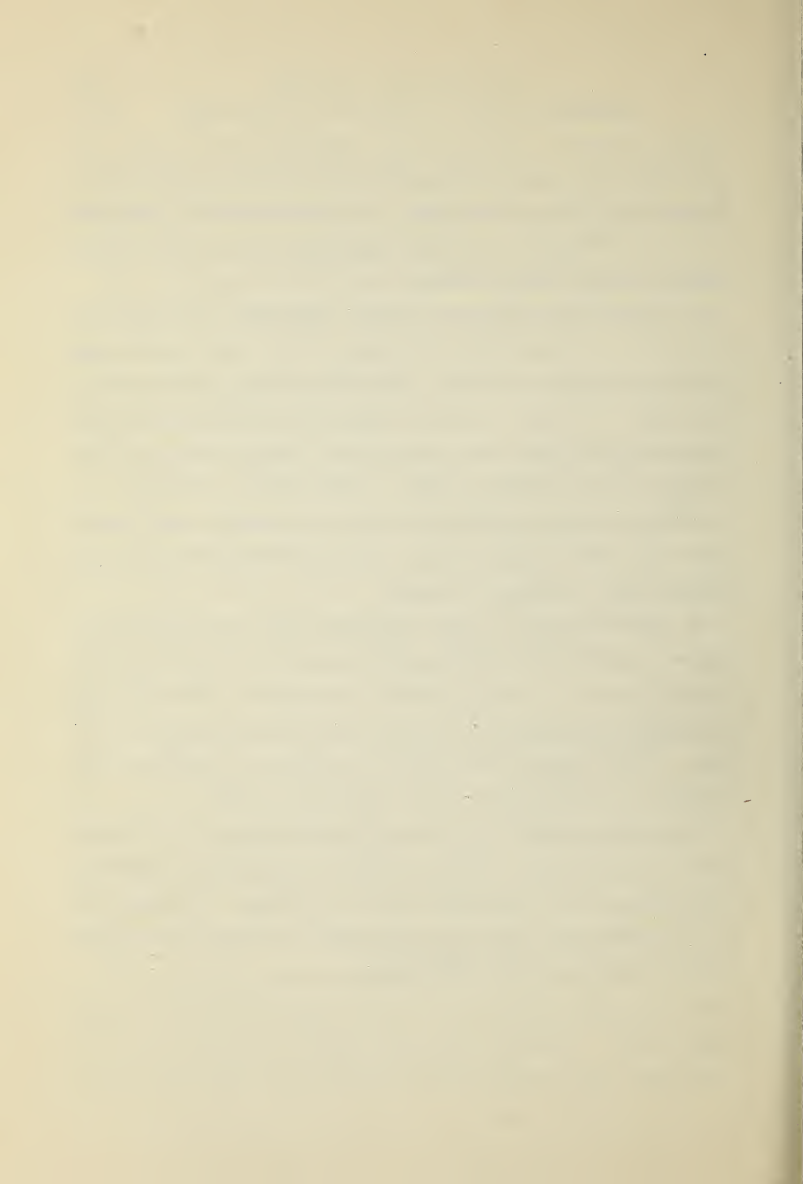
American war and during this period was stationed at Honolulu, being then under the command of Captain Ursil A. Ferguson, and the regiment was led by Lieutenant Colonel Walter Scott.

A flourishing Young Men's Christian Association occupies a commodious structure of its own on Broad street; the property of the association being estimated at \$20,000. It has a membership of about 500, a well-equipped reading room with rare conveniences for the supply of such books as may be desired by members.

Thirty lawyers and about the same number of doctors look after the business interests and health of the community and outlying country.

A glove factory, a shirt factory, numerous cigar factories, a silk mill, building firms and founderies furnish employment to a large number of people. The Moody & Gould Company is also an important business center. Five large hotels and a number of smaller ones furnish entertainment to the traveling public.

Centrally located in the most picturesque portion of the Susquehanna valley, with its extensive business interests, as it was said in former times of Rome, it can be truly said that now all roads in Otsego and Delaware counties lead to Oneonta.





New State Armory, Oneonta, N. Y.



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# APPENDIX

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## APPENDIX.

### Oneonta in 1841.

**T**HE following is a column of business cards from the "ONEONTA WEEKLY JOURNAL," of July 1, 1841. It is nearly a correct showing of what the business of the village was then.

Headquarters at the foot of Chestnut street. New Fall and Winter goods. Timothy Sabin is now receiving a fresh supply of Spring and Summer Goods, comprising a general assortment of Dry Goods, Groceries, Crockery, Hardware, Dye Stuffs, Paints, Oils, etc., etc. for sale as low as at any establishment west of the Hudson river. Please call and examine goods and prices; they are well selected, and will be sold cheap for Cash, Produce, or a liberal credit.

Oneonta, May 13, 1841.

Cabinet and Chair Warehouse, No. 10 Chestnut st., Oneonta. The subscriber respectfully informs his friends, and the public generally, that he has opened a Cabinet Warehouse at No. 10 Chestnut st., Oneonta, where he manufactures and keeps constantly on hand, a general assortment of Cabinet Furniture, comprising Mahogany, Cherry and Maple work. Also, a good assortment of Chairs, will be kept constantly on hand,

and all other articles generally found at an establishment of this kind.

N. B. Most kinds of lumber and grain will be received in payment.

Oneonta, Sept. 17, 1840.

R. W. Hopkins.

A Card. Executed at the office of the Oneonta Weekly Journal with neatness and dispatch and on reasonable terms, Job Printing of every description.

E. Cooke, Attorney at Law, Oneonta, Otsego County, N. Y.

John B. Steele, Attorney, &c., Oneonta, Otsego County, N. Y. Office, in the stone building opposite the Otsego House, Main street.

Mason Gilbert, Hatter, Main street, Oneonta.

Cooke & Brown, retail dealers in Dry Goods, Groceries, Crockery, Hardware, Iron, Steel, &c. Store under the office of the Oneonta Weekly Journal, Main street, Oneonta.

Potter C. Burton, dealer in Watches, Clocks, Jewelry, Silver and German Silver Ware, &c. One door north of Cooke & Brown's Store, Main street, Oneonta.

Timothy Sabin, retail dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Crockery, Hardware, Iron, Steel, &c., &c. Store opposite the Oneonta House, Main street, foot of Chestnut, Oneonta.

Clyde & Cook, retail dealers in Dry Goods, Groceries, Crockery, Hardware, Drugs & Medicines, Dye Woods

& Dye Stuffs, &c., &c. Store nearly opposite the Otsego House, Main street, Oneonta.

Snow & VanWoert, manufacturers of, and wholesale and retail dealers in Tin, Sheet-iron, and Copper ware, Stoves, &c., &c. Over Clyde & Cook's Store, Main street, Oneonta.

C. Noble, manufacturer of, and wholesale and retail dealer in Beach's Patent Shaving Soap, Beach's Liquid Opodeldock, and Black Varnish, &c., &c. Main street, Oneonta.

Robert W. Hopkins, manufacturer of, and dealer in Cabinet Ware and Chairs of every description. Chestnut street, Oneonta.

Cushing & Potter, manufacturers of, and wholesale and retail dealers in Barrels & Firkins, &c., &c. Main st., Oneonta.

W. W. Snow's Wool Carding and Cloth Dressing Establishment. Opposite E. R. Ford's Store, Main street, Oneonta.

Bennet & Smith, dealers in Morocco, Boots and Shoes, Thread, Nails and Findings, &c., &c. Chestnut street, Oneonta, Otsego Co., N. Y.

George W. Andrews, Chair Maker, and House & Sign Painter, (Chestnut street), Oneonta, Otsego Co., N. Y.

C. G. Cross, Waggon and Carriage Maker, Chestnut street, Oneonta.

E. R. Ford, retail dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Crockery, Hardware, Drugs & Medicines, Dye Woods, & Dye Stuffs, Iron, Steel, &c., &c., Main st., Oneonta.



## The Town's Military Record

### VETERANS OF EARLY WARS.

The names of soldiers who enlisted in the earlier wars from what is now Oneonta cannot be given, there being no extant record. The following, however, are veterans of the Revolutionary war and of the war of 1812, who are buried within the boundaries of the present township:

Revolutionary Soldiers.—Thomas Morenus and Peter Brewer, both formerly referred to, are buried at Riverside. So also is Simeon Walling, who went down the river with Clinton in 1779, and later came back and took up lands on what is known as the Slade farm. David Scramling, who died in 1824, was grandfather of Allen Scramling. Henry Scramling, who died in 1882, was Second Lieutenant in Tryon County Militia. James Thompson, a soldier of the French and Indian and Revolutionary wars, was at Bunker Hill. He lived with David Scramling and was never married. These three are buried in the old graveyard on the Ephraim Parish farm. Peter Scofield of the Westchester County Militia, 3d Regiment, died August 13, 1833, aged 84 years. Colonel Pierce VanCortlandt, John Cook, who died January 4th, 1841, aged 85 years, Captain Lory Jenks—these are buried in Cook ceme-

tery, West Oneonta. Joe (probably Joseph) Dolliver is buried in an old graveyard near the Otego creek about two miles above West Oneonta. His descendants still own and live on the farm.

The veterans of the war of 1812 buried in Oneonta are Jeremy Morenus, Captain Samuel Bixby, James Pendleton, Frederick Bornt, and Bartholomew McGuire. All are buried in Riverside cemetery.

#### VETERANS OF THE REBELLION.

The following is a list of those who entered the service of the United States during the War of the Rebellion to fill the quotas of this town, as compiled by N. J. Farmer in 1865: Alexander Brewer, Edwin T. Farmer, Ira Green, Homer Broadwell, Nathan L. Hemstreet, Albert Graves, John B. Goodsell, Henry B. Theadon, Captain Sacket Olin, Orrin J. Gifford, Albert Schermerhorn, George Baker, Francis E. Crosier, Chas. M. Crosier, First Lieut. Horace Hudson, William H. Peck, Joseph Benedict, William Mickle, Nathan Graves, James Roberts, Second Lieut. Raymond L. Ford, James Decker, Elisha Lewis, William Ofield, Michael Riley, Maurice Temple, Benjamin Rathbun, Benjamin Ambrose, John Archer, Thomas Brosman, M. P. Childs, Theodore Denoyer, Joseph English, Patrick Flynn, William Fadling, James Finn, Martin Henry, Edwin C. House, Peter Leavenbrewer, Henry Leatherman, Thos.



Madigan, Allen F. Mallory, William Price, Abel Palmer, Daniel Rodgers, George A. Robb, John L. Sickles, John VanVolkenburgh, James Wheeler, Henry Warner, Edward Wells, Robert Winn, Henry C. Whitman, Alexander W. Hand, Myron Yager, George Reynolds, Henry C. Grant, David Alger, Jr., Chauncey Alger, Malcom Keenan, Elias Houghtaling, Hiram Alger, Homer Brewer, Milton Brewer, Elliott E. Barnes, Samuel Leonard, Jr., Levi S. Miles, George W. Butts, Alonzo Pratt, Joseph S. Massett, Henry Wickham, James B. Miller, Solomon Sullivan, Henry S. Porter, Woodbury K. Cook, Nathan Bridges, Second Lieut. George W. Quackenbush, Elvin Cutshaw, Isaac Quackenbush, Samuel G. Cook, R. P. Bishop, Ezra G. Potter, P. S. Dunham, Leonard Pratt, Ira J. Emmons, Oliver Kimball, Solomon Kimball, Edwin D. Farmer, John B. Shove, Stewart A. Grant, Abel F. Packard, Warren P. Burton, Willis Snow, Phineas C. Fish, Francis Strait, William Strickland, Silas J. Strader, Harvey B. VanAlstine, Norman D. Jewell, Lieut.-Colonel Charles A. Watkins, John Youngs, Charles E. Foote, Andrew J. Sullivan, Erastus Patterson, Second Lieut. George Q. Watkins, Albert P. Watkins, Charles Gates, Matterson Youngs, Nelson Hoag, James H. Quackenbush, John T. Pardoe, Walter Pardoe, Robert Cooke, Charles Culver, Orrin J. Cooke, John R. Wolcott, Daniel Shultz, James H. Hamilton, Elisha S. Fisher, Charles N. Merrills, William Olin, James P. Leake, Ernest Peters,



John T. Bronson, Edgar Reddington, Thomas H. Morris, John B. Woodruff, Lewis J. Woodruff, Alfred Barton, George Page, John S. Driggs, Edgar S. Driggs, Willard Morell, Edward H. Whitney, Lewis Ingalls, Surgeon Meigs Case, John Ingalls.

The following residents of this town at date of enlistment were credited elsewhere: James D. Stowell, Stephen H. Drum, Levi W. Broadwell, Francis Cepperley, George W. Ingalls, Henry R. Abel, Chauncey Cepperley, Wallace Betterley, Ira S. Miller, Leroy Pratt, Herman D. Yager, Ezra H. VanAlstyne, George A. Pardee, Alonzo R. Watkins, Allen H. Green, Edward W. Brewer, Edward B. Jewell, DeWitt C. Barnes, E. Reynolds, John Jones, Edward H. Whitney.

#### ONEONTA IN THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR.

Oneonta was largely and creditably represented in the Spanish-American war of 1898, nearly all of the volunteers for that war from Otsego county being residents of Oneonta and members of Company G, First New York Regiment. In the list which follows a few names are of members of that company who resided elsewhere; and there are also a few names of residents of Oneonta who served in other companies. The company left Oneonta May 2d, 1898, and after service of nearly eight months were ordered home from Honolulu. Oneonta was reached by them in the morning of December 26th, 1898.

Major Walter Scott, Captain Ursil A. Ferguson, First Lieutenant H. A. Tucker, Second Lieutenant F. W. Boardman, Quarter-Master Sergeant Frank L. Olin, Sergeants F. O. Rollins, A. G. Butts, C. L. Pruyn, W. H. Sessions, F. M. H. Jackson; Corporals S. E. Bartow, A. L. Cook, O. J. Johnson, D. F. Keyes, C. W. Herrick, M. H. Riddell, W. H. VanDeusen, Grant Barnes, Edward A. Groat, Sterling F. Higley, Frank Pattengill, G. V. Johnson; Privates M. Anderson, Merritt Alger, Henry Alger, George Allen, R. H. Baker, Gurdon Barnhardt, A. B. Bush, Erwin Blanchard, John Burnside, W. K. Brink, J. E. Bush, M. E. Baxter, L. J. Bennett, W. E. Burlingame, W. M. Birdsall, Charles F. Brown, J. N. Conant, A. B. Crouch, George Crouch, J. S. Cotton, C. M. Cain, George L. Colvin, Joseph R. Connors, Wm. D. Craft, Fred C. Carroll, Charles F. Carter, M. B. Champlain, C. S. Doyle, S. J. Donnelly, E. D. Edson, Frank Evans, Fred Fleming, Clarence Fisher, F. L. Ferris, M. J. Garvin, Edgar T. Gill, W. S. Gray, G. E. Hitchcock, N. C. Harmer, H. B. Heath, B. J. Hotaling, C. L. Hotaling, R. P. Hill, LaVerne Holmes, H. A. Hamilton, L. C. Jones, W. F. Keeney, R. A. McMorris, George W. Norton, F. W. Neal, — Pannaci, F.R. Pashley, W. I. Pierce, L. J. Preston, G. L. Peet, W. J. Pointer, F. V. Riley, John Sommers, Arthur W. Shultz, Ira Sherman, T. F. Smith, N. Shermerhorn, James H. Stapleton, M. B. Stapleton, F. B. Sheldon, W. E. Sommerville, A. B. Silliman, S. J. Stone, John

V. Springsteen, C. Thorne, S. J. Turp, T. Truhart, R. D. Tallmadge, A. B. Webster, H. P. Wellman, C. O. Weidman, R. H. Westcott, Burton Woodbeck, Frank F. Klippert, George C. Merrihew, John R. Miller, John H. Mooney, Wesley Thorne, W. Thornburn, F. A. Voorhees, George Vanderpool, William Ackert.



## Excerpts From "Oneonta Memories." \*

### THE RAILROAD CELEBRATION IN 1865.

Toward the close of summer, Oneonta saw a day that was the most memorable in all her history—a day that may be termed the bright particular turning point in her career and which revealed the first faint glimmerings of that subsequent remarkable prosperity which is so well testified to by her great solid lines of brick and masonry which we now see.

That auspicious day was the 29th of August, and the occasion was the formal opening up to business of the Albany and Susquehanna railroad between Oneonta and the capital city of the state.

In this place it is proper to mention the name of an old and prominent citizen, whose energy and ability were conspicuously shown in overcoming the physical obstacles that existed in the face of this great work between Cobleskill and Oneonta. As most of my readers doubtless anticipate, I refer to Harvey Baker.

The 29th of August opened with a beautiful morning, and before the day had far advanced every highway leading into the village was more or less thronged

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\*By W. V. Huntington, 1891.

with people afoot and in conveyances, all bound for the common point of attraction.

The citizens had appointed a reception committee, comprising E. R. Ford, Esq., L. L. Bundy, Esq., John M. Ferrell, D. M. Miller, Colonel W. W. Snow, D. J. Yager, Esq., and Timothy Sabin, while another committee had erected arches completely spanning the prominent streets. These structures were profusely decorated with flags and flowers, and likewise displayed mottoes in the following significant sentences:

"Friends of our Enterprise, Welcome;" "Isolation Obsolete;" "The Hudson and Susquehanna United;" "Ramsey, Our Little Giant;" "State Officials—their Deeds in Lines of Iron;" "Ex-Governor, no Veto;" "Governor Fenton, Our Railroad Friend," and "The Directors, Labor Omnia Vincit."

The stores and public buildings were also decorated with flags.

About noon the excursion train from Albany arrived, bringing another addition to what was already the largest number of people Oneonta had ever seen within her borders at one time. Among the newly arrived guests were many prominent state and railroad officials, who were met at the depot by four companies of Colonel Dunbar's 41st regiment of State militia, headed by Major-General S. S. Burnside and staff.

The invited guests were then escorted to the two village hotels, where dinner was served.

Early in the afternoon the distinguished visitors, accompanied by the reception committee, repaired to the First Baptist church-yard, where L. L. Bundy, Esq., called the vast crowd to order.

Speeches were then made by Governor Fenton, Lieut. Governor Alvord, Hon. J. H. Ramsey, Judge Gould, Wm. Steuart, Esq., Hon. George A. Starkweather, and P. P. Rogers, Esq.

At four o'clock p. m. the invited guests took the train to return to Albany, and their departure was made amid cheers from the men and boys, booming of cannon, music of the bands and the waving of many handkerchiefs in the hands of the fair sex.

It was truly a day whose enthusiasm is rarely equaled.

On the 19th of March, 1866, an excursion train was run to Unadilla, in honor of the formal opening of the railroad for business as far as that point. The train was drawn by the locomotive "E. R. Ford," and upon arrival from Albany and departure from Oneonta it was duly saluted by General Burnside's "brass six-pounder." Among the earlier names of engines were "E. C. Delavan," "E. P. Prentice," "Jared Goodyear," "John Cook," "Charles Courter," "Minard Harder," "A. B. Watson," "J. H. Ramsey," "Peter Cagger" and "John Westover."



## LEADING CITIZENS IN 1866.

Among the business and professional men of Oneonta about 1866 were E. R. Ford, Solon Huntington, Harvey Baker, Charles W. Lewis, Place & Huntington, J. C. Tice, Silas Sullivan, A. G. Shaw, D. M. Miller, Cope Brothers & Co., L. S. Osborn, Peters & Wickwire, John M. Packard, S. H. Case, M. D., Meigs Case, M. D., H. A. Hamilton, M. D., N. C. Moak, J. H. Keyes, S. J. Cook, Bundy & Bridges, P. G. Wieting, S. Bowen, William McCrum, R. W. Hopkins, William D. Bissell, William Johnston, A. Mendel & Brothers, James Roberts & Co., Jay McDonald, N. I. Ford, D. J. Yager, E. C. Bundy, Marble & Farmer, T. S. Gault, A. Chapman, Peck & Coates, Reynolds Brothers & Francisco, A. D. Reynolds, M. D., David T. Evans, M. D., William H. Morris, Albert Morris, L. P. Carpenter, G. W. Reynolds, Elisha Shepherd, S. Brownson, M. Keenan, David Morrell, L. Goldsmith, T. J. Gildersleeve, A. J. Gates, Timothy Watkins, J. R. L. Walling, Timothy Sabin, E. R. Sabin, Potter C. Burton, Col. W. W. Snow, Major-General S. S. Burnside, J. P. VanWoert, M. N. Elwell, H. Shellman, Turner McCall, H. J. Brewer, N. D. Jewell, George Bond, S. Hudson, H. S. Pardee, W. S. Fritts, Anthony White, Deacon Bingham, William Mickle, John Cutshaw, J. S. Doolittle, and H. McCall.





Walnut Street, 1870



## PUBLIC SCHOOL PUPILS IN 1868.

The following is a list of pupils comprising all who received tuition during the period that Mr. Saxton was principal in the new building of the Oneonta Union Free School, commencing October 26, 1868. This was the first year of the Oneonta Union School.

Primary Department, Miss Lizzie Wing, Teacher, term commencing October 26, 1868: Ellen Morenus, Louisa Converse, Carrie Huntington, Blanch Villos, Ellen Spencer, Jennie Ingalls, Flora Strait, Frank Strait, Josephine Alger, Ida Manchester, Lizzie Jones, Margaret Jones, Flora Vanderburg, Hattie Wickham, Helen Brewer, Louisa Alton, May Peebles, George Peebles, Lottie Bissell, Louis Cohn, Gould Marble, William Maloney, James Maloney, William Vanderburg, Floyd Harrington, George Long, Henry Long, Charles Burgin, Sherman Reynolds, Robert Hopkins, Charles Farmer, Charles Fairchild, Virgil Barnes, Frank Bissell, Elmer Howe, Debois Hasbrooke, Egbert Hasbrooke, Elmer Coates, Hattie Bennett, Lelia Doolittle, Laverne Doolittle, Wesley Smith, Clarence Wetsel, Clara Pope, Cora Pope, Minnie Pratt, Mary White, Ada Ford, William Fairchild, David Alger, Edward Alger, Alice White, Hattie White, Henry Driggs, Ella Garvin, Katie Hynes, Florence Wood, Avis Youngs, Robert Keenan, Frank Briggs, Irving Briggs, George France, Lottie France.

Intremediate Department, Miss Mary C. Vergeson,

Teacher; term commencing October 26, 1868.—William Ingold, John Brewer, Jerome Fuller, Michael Maloney, Howard Farmer, Richard Cooper, Arthur Ford, William Morris, Edward Barnes, El Dorr VanWoert, W.V. Huntington, Edward Carpenter, Reed Saunders, Fred. Whitcomb, Charles Pardee, Charles Lewis, Frank Pardee, Howard Wickham, Fred Spencer, Ambrose Bissell, Leverne Reynolds, John Johnston, Union Ousterhout, Carr Peck, James Marble, Frank Barnes, Melissa Gault, Ettie Carr, Helen Patterson, Louise Elwell, Lizzie Myers, Alice Beach, Ella Harper, Martha Coates, Lulie Ford, Fannie McDonald, Mary Johnston, Nellie Ford, Mary Reynolds, Flora Jacobs, Florence Bassett, Estella Hemstreet, Ida Parker, Marion Beach, Leanna Hubbard, Viola Doolittle, Kittie McGinley, Orlene Mickle, Mary Pardee, Fannie Cornish, Marcia Doolittle, Amanda Mickle, Merton Ford, Morrel Nelson, George Smith, Emerson Hasbrooke, Wirt McCrum, Adelbert Butts, Clarence Spaulding, Jacob Cornish, Emerald Jewell, Charles Miles, Frank Miller, Willie Graves, David Rose, Leon Mickle, Leopold Mendel, Leon Mendel, Robbie Jacobs, Willie Marble, James Long, Philo Brewer, Jackson Couse, Dell Beams, Eugene Alton, George Jones, Herman Sherwood, Sylvester Alger, Charles Dye, Millard Briggs, George Winslow, Lizzie Swart, Bertha Newman, Lavanche Hudson, Emma Bishop, Nellie Lewis, Anna Cope, Ada Yager, Adna Brezee, Mary Swart, Anna Beach, Jennie Strait,

Mary Brezee, Ida Brewer, Alice Fairchild, Rachael Cohn, Jennie Fairchild, Augusta Hasbrooke, Mary Burgin, Jennie Watkins, Alice Brownson, Kittie Ramsey, Anna Alton, Ida Sherwood, Augusta Alger.

Senior Department, Wilbur F. Saxton, Teacher; term commencing October 26, 1868.—Clark McCrum, W. E. Yager, Charles Baker, Clinton VanWoert, Frank Peck, Arthur Sullivan, William Figger, Henry Saunders, Orson Miller, Charles Alton, James Slade, Charles Youngman, Austin Sage, Eugene Parr, Emery Smith, William Shellman, George Pardoe, John Silvernail, Noble Patterson, Charles Hasbrooke, Charles A. Smith, Henry Potter, Fitch Parish, Mathew Cornish, Orrin Yager, Maggie Bixby, Emma Gates, Lucy Bond, Nellie Myers, Emma Birdsall, Louise Sullivan, Nettie Wickham, Dora Roberts, Mary C. Burton, Alice Farmer, Mary E. Blend, Jennie McDonald, Kate Sullivan, Myra E. Bixby, Nellie Howe, Helena Uebel, Mary Howe, Libbie Culver, Anna Hudson, Viola Tucker, Ella Whitcomb, Belle Pardoe, Julia Brewer, Phebe Richards, Leona Mickle, Ambrose D. Thurston, George Ingalls, Albert Marble, Edward Lewis, Samuel Reynolds, Alfred Shaw, George Gates, William B. Bissell, Marvin Siple, George Harper, Willis Peebles, Alpheus Sabin, Richard Blakeley, William Basinger, George Young, Emulus Reynolds, Edward Pardoe, Oscar Manchester, Anna Halsted, Rachael Farmer, Alice Yager, Hattie Ford, Lou. Furman, Francelia Richards, Anna Wickham, Hannah Peebles,

Helen Sullivan, Mary Alton, Hattie Ward, Mary Mickle, Amanda Smith (Laurens), Nettie Soule (Colliers), Helena McCrum, Hattie Jenks, Mary Farrington, Hannah Strait, Ada Campbell, Julia V. Pattengill (New Lisbon), Florence Eaton (New Lisbon).

Sundry other "Senior" pupils of 1868-70.—Azro Tyler (Westford), —Seeley, Leroy Mickle, Herbert VanWoert, David Wickham, Andrew Wickham, George Barlow, Quincy Parish, LeGrand Parish, Andrew Parish, Bernard Gross, D. W. Chase, Silas Parish, Samuel S. Shepherd, Isaac B. Peet, Samuel Ballard, Charles Brewer, Herbert Spencer, Andrew Fagin, Charles Cobb, Charles Carl, Peter Johnston, Perry Blend, Leonard Beach, Harvey Perkins, Frank Reynolds, Flora Dunham, Emma Dunham, Lena Brownell, Anna Whitmarsh, Kate Manchester, Miss Woodbeck, Delia Brewer, Ettie Rowe, Ettie Spencer, Ella Whitney, Alice Emmons, Ida Osterhout, Amy Barnes, Anna J. Riggs (Cannonsville), Flora Beach, Lillie Swart, Alice C. Wright, Martha Slosson, Sarah Brewer, Alice Betts, Ella Stewart, Agnes Wood, Alice Hathaway.



## Historical Sketches from The Oneonta Herald.

The following article from The Oneonta Herald of December 14, 1882, will interest not only the comparatively few remaining who knew and remember the man referred to, but also the many to whom the early history of our township has a fascination which attaches in other lands to historical or legendary accounts of days and scenes much more remote. This article is from the pen of W. E. Yager.

### UNCLE JEREMY AND HIS TIMES.

Soon after the close of the Revolutionary war, the fear of the Indians having been dissipated by the crushing defeat they had met at the hands of Sullivan, emigrants from Albany and the country east began to seek homes in the fertile valley of the upper Susquehanna, at that time an extreme frontier.

Among the earliest of these was Thomas Morenus. The title to the lands in this quarter of the state was originally in great patentees, owning thousands of acres which they had obtained from the government on easy terms. One of the chief of these land owners was Goldsbrow Banyar, whose grant comprised a very considerable portion of the lands opposite this village on the other side of the river. To Banyar Thomas Morenus made application for a tract of one hundred acres,



which was accorded him in consideration of the payment of one hundred and twenty-five dollars.

Making his way west, about the year 1793, from Albany county to the junction of the Schenevus and Susquehanna, the emigrant journeyed thence, by an Indian trail whose line was probably not far from that of the road between Oneonta and Colliers, to the other side of the river, where, leaving the trail, after a preliminary settlement higher up the mountain he finally located his purchase on the bluff opposite the Red bridge and to the east of the present Amsden place. Here for the remainder of his life he dwelt, and there was passed the life of his son, Jeremiah T., who died on the morning of Wednesday, in his eighty-ninth year, having been born in June, 1794.

A grand tho' sombre scene must this valley have been at that time. Dense forests of evergreen lined the hillsides, while the interval was thickset with a heavy growth of hard wood. There was still an Indian village at Colliers. Through the forest yet roamed herds of deer, bear were not uncommon, while at night might be heard the long drawn howl of the wolf or more rarely the strange cry of the catamount. If the wood teemed with game, no less did the streams abound with fish; not such as in these days serve to allure the truant schoolboy, but trout, pike and shad in size and number beyond the wildest dream of a modern sportsman.

Mid surroundings such as these did Thomas Morenus hew out his humble home, and in a cabin built of logs, with clay and moss, to stop the crevices, a great yawning fire-place, the loom and spindle standing near, Uncle Jeremiah first saw the light.

The family were not without neighbors. Over on the flat was the VanDerwerker saw mill. Beyond on what is now Main street, was a little story-and-a-half hotel, whose proprietor, by dint of industrious cultivation of a tract of land stretching along the western side of what now is Dietz street, managed to obtain a comfortable living. There was also a house at the Oneonta Plains and another, possibly more, at Colliers. As years passed, additional settlers came. Houghtaling, Hubbard, Seacraft, Adams, Brewer, Brink, Whitmarsh, are among the names thus added to the list of pioneers.

Soon the forest began to show here and there great gaps; game grew scarcer; cornfields appeared; a small stock of goods was placed in a little building not far from the hotel.

Not unpleasant was the life of these sturdy frontiersmen. The soil was productive, and of corn and wheat there was enough. If cane sugar was unknown, there was maple in abundance, and tho' coffee and tea were unheard of at that date, they found a tolerable substitute in the leaf of the wintergreen and other herbs. Game and fish were generally to be had for the taking,

while the few cattle and sheep driven along with them in their pilgrimage, grew apace in number, despite the foray now and then of a stray wolf. Perhaps the greatest privation in the bill of fare was from the dearth of fruit. It was not until Uncle Jeremy was a lad of fourteen that an orchard was planted, with seed brought by his sister from an eastern locality. As for clothing, there was little "store cloth" to be seen, but the home-spun prepared from the flax and wool of the farm proved quite as servicable; and so habituated had the old gentleman become to it, that he continued its use at intervals to the end of his days.

In occupation there was variety. "They farmed it summers and lumbered it winters." All thro' the cold months the pioneers were busy with their axes, felling the great pines on the hillsides, which, cut into logs and rolled into the stream, were in springtime rafted down the river. The trip to Havre de Grace was not, however, the only way out of the wilderness. As the roads improved, a steady, tho' not very extensive, trade grew up with Albany. What grain could be transported thither found a ready sale at remunerative prices. The money obtained, with that derived from lumbering, was applied in payment of the farms, many of which had been purchased on time. There was likewise another source of revenue; among the first buildings to appear along the line of Main street were two "asheries." They were located below the present road,

and were used for the manufacture of potash from wood ashes. At the ashery the ashes to be had for the burning from farms whence the owners wished to clear the hard wood, could be disposed of at ten cents a bushel.

Thus matters stood at the breaking out of the second war with England. Uncle Jeremy was then a stout boy of twenty, with a healthy love of adventure, which, as the day of the "Tories and Injuns" was for this part of the country passed, he gratified by enlistment in company with several of his companions against the "Britishers." The experience of the recruits was by no means exciting, however, as most of their time was passed in camp on Manhattan Island.

Returning from the war, he shortly exchanged the sword for the scythe, and marrying a few years later, settled down upon the old place to his former life of farmer and lumberman, the latter pursuit passing into desuetude, as the forests melted away.

Quietly he toiled. A family came to him, Cares increased, Busied in his daily labor, did he notice how every day the scene about him changed? how the meadows widened, how the cornfields broadened, how the farm houses grew thicker and thicker? Still he was the same. Still he lived in the house which his father had built years before, to take the place of the cabin where he was born. Still he went every day to his honest work in the good old-fashioned manner. But

"the village" was changing. Store after store, house after house, was added to the little hamlet of his boyhood. New roads were built. Turnpikes brought trade and travel. Oneonta began to be heard of. Then came the struggle for a railroad. He could remember well when a trail thro' the woods was all they wanted. Locomotives were undreamt of when he was a boy. What next? Well, the railroad came, and with it dependent industries. Then followed the marvelous growth of the last decade—all these changes within the lifetime of this one man.

Of German descent, Uncle Jeremy was short and rather slight in build, but hale and hearty to a remarkable degree. So keen was his eyesight, that up to the time of his death it was his habit to read the papers, in which occupation he took great pleasure, by the light of a candle and without the aid of spectacles. No less vigorous in mind was this hardy pioneer, than in body. His memory was most remarkable, extending to minute particulars of his early days, and ranging thence with more or less distinctness, thro' all the leading events in his after life and the history of the community in which he so long has been a landmark. Doubtless his kind heart and cheerful, easy-going disposition had much to do in keeping hale and sound both mind and body.



## AN ANCIENT VILLAGE SITE.

A very remarkable discovery was brought to light in April, 1887, upon the well-known Slade flats at the junction of the Charlotte with the Susquehanna, on the south side of the latter stream, at a point some two miles above this village. During a period of high water a broad current was in some way diverted from the main channel across a bench of alluvial land rising two or three feet above the general level of the neighboring bank. The field having been plowed in the fall and the soil to the depth of two feet or more consisting mainly of a fine alluvium, a gully two or three rods wide and as many feet deep, to the clay subsoil, was cut clear across the field, for some rods—to a “binnacle” or overflow putting out from the main stream at some distance below. The current does not appear to have been very swift and in consequence objects of some weight contained in the soil were left behind as the latter filtered away.

For ten days or a fortnight the flowed section was under water. When the flood subsided, Mr. Slade and his son paid a visit to the place to ascertain the extent of the damage, when what was their surprise to note in the bottom of the new-made channel many fragments of rude pottery mingled with flint chips, arrow and spear points and similar remains. They gathered many, and the news of the discovery spreading, the spot was visited by many persons.



The site laid bare by the flood is unquestionably that of an aboriginal village. Altogether some two thousand fragments of pottery have been taken from a few square rods of surface exposed, together with a hundred spear and arrow points—many of them of unusual form—several flint drills, as many “sharpening stones,” two small granite axes, numerous “sinkers,” etc., etc. Several ancient fire places, of river cobbles bedded together, were disclosed, from one of which not less than a peck of charcoal fragments was exhumed. The pottery, several pieces of which show an exterior surface of three or four square inches, is both plain and ornamental, the latter in most intricate design. One fragment shows a human face, but straight lines variously combined and curious punctured patterns are the prevailing type. Rims and edges, being the thickest and least perishable portions, abound in the collections made. The plain pottery is remarkably hard and well preserved, and in both plain and ornamental the inside surface is in most cases of a black color in strong contrast with the brick red or chocolate hue of the exterior.

The collections made would prove of interest to the most casual observer. Whether they are the remains of a red race may be doubted. The top soil in the neighborhood abounds in ordinary Indian relics, arrow and spear points, “hammer stones,” and the like—but it contains no sign of this pottery. Tradition runs,

too, that there was an Indian village in the locality. But it might well have existed two feet above the level laid bare by the flood. For there is nothing to prove that the soil had before been disturbed for ages. If indeed this be the site of the Indian village, then is it to be said that there can hardly exist that difference between the Indians and the mysterious Moundbuilders which has been commonly supposed, for the pottery obtained on the Slade flats is precisely the same with the pottery exhumed in western mounds.

It may be remarked in connection with this subject that a so-called "Indian mound" exists on Walling's Island not far below this ancient village site; that there is another near the mouth of the Otego creek, a third at Sidney and a fourth in the Unadilla valley.

Many of the more interesting articles found on Slade's flats came into possession of Willard E. Yager, and were added to his very extensive collection of Indian relics which was, unfortunately, lost at the burning of the first Normal building in February, 1894.

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Concerning the Indian mound on Walling's Island, above referred to, the following from the pen of Mr. Yager will be of interest:

A short distance below the point where the Charlotte creek unites with the Susquehanna, which may be two and a-half miles above the village, the river forks, a branch sweeping around close to the base of the high

hills that rise to the east of Oneonta, while the main stream flows a little to the south of west, receiving the branch again at the base of a steep hill or bluff, whose wooded face, looking to the northward, is plainly visible from the village.

The very considerable area of flat land enclosed by this ramification of the river, is known as Walling's Island. At this season of year, when the stream that separates it from the mainland is in many places almost dry, the island is easily accessible.

In fall and spring thro' the intervening channel passes a considerable body of water, which in earlier times, when the forests regulated the flow, was, they tell me, constant.

Fifty years ago this piece of ground, in common with others in this vicinity, was quite heavily wooded with beech, birch, maple and basswood, trees eighteen inches thro' being plentiful. It is now, in general, but a stretch of grassland, with an occasional butternut by way of shade, or a scraggy apple tree, the latter perhaps a relic of the pioneers.

A few acres are under plow, and a characteristic of the soil which cannot fail to strike the attention of one who visits the spot, is its remarkable freedom from stones, tho' these in all sizes abound of course in the channels that surround the little prairie. Its surface is altogether level, save where the waters at some unusually high tide have cut here and there a cross channel,

or "slang," as they are termed by farmers along the stream. As one passes from the foot of the island up-stream, traversing perhaps two-thirds its length, his progress is interrupted somewhat by one of those natural sluices, rather deeper than the average, tho' long disused and grassed over at the bottom as thickly as the banks themselves.

Just upon the edge of this ancient stream-bed rises an oblong knoll or mound, about twelve feet above the level of the field at its summit, whence the slope is regular to the base, in size perhaps forty feet by thirty. The mound is at present overgrown with bushes, low sumacs and brambles, and might not at first, perchance, excite curiosity.

Owners of the land, however, years ago, took notice of the fact that this is the only elevation of ground on the island, and examined it with considerable attention. They reached the conclusion that the mound was of artificial origin and was the work of the Indians who long ago dwelt in this region.

There is much in the appearance of the hillock to support such a theory: It is composed mainly of stones, tho' considerable soil is intermingled, perhaps from design, perhaps by the operation of natural causes; we have already alluded to the circumstances that the surrounding land is almost free from stone. Evidently the mound has existed for more than a century; for near its summit is the stump of a hardwood

tree, which could not have been less than twenty inches thro' when growing, tho' now so decayed as to crumble at the touch. Its shape is very peculiar; its occurrence, singly, in the midst of an unbroken level, yet more inexplicable upon any theory of natural origin.

Beyond all question the island was a great resort of the Indians. When first the soil was plowed, arrow and spear points of flint were uncovered by hundreds, and not more than three years since, in passing thro' a cornfield some distance south of the mound, the writer picked up a score or two of these interesting relics as they lay scattered between the rows of corn. It is stated, moreover, by those most familiar with the locality, that only arrow heads, stone hatchets and other remains of warlike character are to be found on the island. Naturally, then, one is disposed to believe that a battle once was fought not far from where this mound now stands, and that its material was then collected and heaped together as a monument and tomb.

A member of the family whence the island derives its name tells us, however, that he always heard it said the mound was formed, in the course of many years, in consequence of a custom among the Indians who dwelt here, that each man of them passing near the spot should leave a stone there. Now it is stated by antiquarians who have studied Indian usages, that in the way described by this gentleman, the aborigines were accustomed to mark the spot where occurred heinous murders





Fox Memorial Hospital, Oneonta, N. Y.





or other crimes, and perhaps therefore this curious hillock, if, as supposed, of Indian origin, but commemorates an event in their history.

No serious endeavor has ever been made to clear up the mystery, by an excavation of the mound, tho' this would be an undertaking of no very arduous character, as the stones comprising it are not of large size and the soil interspersed is loose and yielding. It might be well for some enterprising person to take the matter in hand.



## **Recollections of Harvey Baker.**

### **AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF "BARN HILL."**

Barn hill, long before the white man beheld the Empire state, or it had a name and defined location in New Netherland, was occupied by the Iroquois Indians, and was numbered among their most noted "Susquehanna possessions." After the province of New York had been formed it was within that province as a parcel of Albany county. After the close of the old French war and before the days of the American Revolution, it was located in Tryon county. After the close of the war of 1784, the county name was changed to Montgomery, and in 1788 it was in the town of Otsego in that county. In 1791, when Otsego county was formed, Barn Hill was in the town of Unadilla in that new county. The towns of Otego and Suffrage were formed in 1796, and Barn Hill was then in the southern portion of the latter town. In 1801 the name Suffrage was changed to Milford, and in 1817, when the post office was formed and named, it was in the village of Milfordville, its first officially defined locality. In 1830 the town of Oneonta was formed by state legislative enactment and Barn Hill was then as now near the central southern boundary of the town and near the middle of the new-formed village of that name.

Its precise location is nearly south of the junction of

Main and Chestnut streets and just on the southerly line of the Albany & Susquehanna railroad and distant about eighty-two miles westerly from Albany and sixty-one miles easterly from Binghamton. Barn Hill was originally an oblong hill of an elevation of about thirty feet above its surroundings, and in olden times embraced an area of about three acres of land. Its top was level and it was clear from trees or even shrubs when first seen by white men, although it was surrounded with an evergreen forest of large trees, dense in foliage and of great height,

On its northern, eastern and western sides it was surrounded by an impassable swamp, and close under its base on the south flowed the stream known as Silver creek, which furnished the power for the first mill erected within the limits of the town.

The hill was united to the highlands on the northwest by a ridge which, passing as a sort of roadway between the two northern and western swamps, also formed the route for the Indian trail which came down Main street. The trail passed close under the western base of Barn Hill, then followed westerly and southerly along the western bank of Silver creek to where its clear, cold waters joined the Susquehanna.

The ridge before named passed almost directly where the railroad line now is, and it was removed when that work was constructed. This ridge also formed an easy passage to the top of Barn Hill, both on foot and

with teams, and was for many years a means for ingress and egress to and from the top of that notable eminence. It received the name of "Barn Hill," from the fact that years ago William Angel, a pioneer citizen of Oneonta, and a carpenter of remarkable skill, erected a barn upon it.

Previous to that time the eminence was called Indian hill from the fact that the Six Nations had long been accustomed to occupy it as a council ground and a lookout.

These traditions are confirmed by the fact that from the top of the hill can now be seen the site of the Indian orchards and Indian village of Wauteghe, just east of the mouth of the Otego creek, and also the Indian village of Onahricton, located just westerly of the "Adiguatangué" or Charlotte creek, the exact location of which was correctly settled by the investigations pursued for its proof by our townsman, W. E. Yager.

This level topped hill, ever since settlers began to form a hamlet in its vicinity has filled an important niche in the village history. It was a place for athletic sports, quoits, ball plays, wrestling matches and foot races. It was the best place for military parades and company trainings. It was the place for bonfires and for feats of marksmanship. It was the first and only place used for the booming of cannon in announcement of success of all important events. Here echoed forth the guns fired in honor of the opening of the Erie canal

in 1825, of the passage of the turnpike and railroad charters in our county and state, of the triumph of free suffrage, of free schools, and every important public measure of our country's early civil and social advancement.

The McDonalds early became the owners of this memorable hill, and its nearby surroundings. Some years later William Angel, one of Oneonta's pioneers in public improvements, obtained and for some years had possession of this coveted hill, and erected a barn thereon, known then, as before stated, as Barn Hill, and first as Indian Hill, it was once called "Barren Hill," as not a tree or a shrub grew thereon. It was but a trifling change of sound from "barren" to "barn."

In the decade of 1820 Mr. Angel took down the barn and moved it to the corner of Mechanic and Main street. The writer has himself moved some of the old foundation timbers and some of them still remain. After Sylvester Ford, the father of Eliakim R. Ford, purchased the place now known as the Peters place, the barn was moved on the lands of Collier & Goodyear, near where Fairview street now stands; and in 1842, by an arrangement with Collier & Goodyear, this barn came into the possession and occupancy of Mr. Ford. Later it came from Mr. Goodyear into the ownership of Mr. Peters.

The old Indian trail passed just down at the western base of the hill, and to-day (July 23d, 1895), I saw in



the excavation for the sewer the base of one of the piles of stone gathered by the Indians, Another and larger pile was directly at the southwest corner of the hill and just east of the northeast corner of the old house which was torn down by M. N. Elwell about two years ago. This pile of stone was removed in 1842 and used in repairing the saw mill dyke, which then had begun to form a breach. The large yellow willow now standing near the new mill sprang from one of several branches driven in at that turn to strengthen the embankment.

To-day (July 27th)), the workmen engaged in excavating the sewer unearthed the bottom of the old mill dam at a depth of nine or ten feet and a few rods further south the flume and rack, which conveyed water to the first grist mill erected by the McDonalds, were also unearthed. The water power to supply the saw mill, the clothing works and grist mill first erected by the McDonalds, was all furnished by Silver creek, and it was several years before any water was received for such use from the river.

In speaking of the Indian piles of stone it should be mentioned that it was the custom of the Indians to mark their trails by piles of small stones, each Indian passing adding one to the pile as they were journeying past them.

In May, 1841, the old McDonald saw mill was repaired. In 1843 I tore it down and built the one which was a few years ago removed. The sites of these mills are now buried beneath the earth of Barn Hill.

This hill and mill property was purchased by Peter Collier and Jared Goodyear of James McDonald in 1829, and from that date until the present spring the title of most of this property has not changed, sixty years being a long time for lands in the very heart of Oneonta to remain unchanged in title or actual possession. From 1842 to 1850 I was half owner of the mill property, but Barn Hill was not included in the purchase.

I have stated that the booming ground for cannon had been on Barn Hill for almost an entire century. During these years two accidents worthy of notice have occurred in that dangerous business. On the evening of May 18th, 1842, the young men of the vicinity met on the booming ground to try a new cannon. Among them was Roe, the youngest son of James McDonald. He was an employe in the office of the "Oneonta Weekly Journal," which was then published by William J. Knapp, a son of Roe's half sister. By some means Roe was struck by the discharge of the cannon and the flesh of his leg from the knee to the hip was blown or torn off to the bone. Dr. Hamilton and Dr. S. H. Case dressed the limb, and he was carefully carried to his home, the old McDonald house on the north corner of Main and River streets. For weeks these physicians together daily dressed the wound, their care and attentive nursing bringing Roe slowly but surely from death to life. It was late in September before the victim

was able to move about the room and yard. During these long warm summer months of suffering Edgar Reynolds (the eldest son of John Reynolds, and brother of our townsman, George Reynolds of Grand street), was the constant attendant and nurse of the suffering boy and no doubt this care helped its full share toward final convalescence. A better or kinder man than Edgar Reynolds never lived.

Young McDonald recovered, and for ten years thereafter carried on his occupation of printer, and finally, on June 22d, 1852, he died at the home of his mother in Oneonta of consumption. His remains now rest in the family plot in the Riverside cemetery.

July 4th, 1872, another accident occurred on Barn Hill. It was a day noted as one of tea gift sales, clambakes, and sports of various kinds. General S. S. Burnside loaned the state brass cannon to add its full share to the interest of the day. While Peter R. Green was engaged in ramming a cartridge into the gun the charge exploded and literally blew the arm from the young man's shoulder. Great as was the shock, he survived, and still lives and has a fair promise of still many years of useful life. After this accident the state called in the gun. The cannon which wounded Roe was never seen after that memorable May night in 1842. No doubt it still rests in one of the nearby swamps, to which somebody trusted its future safety.

A short time hence Barn Hill, with its traditions,

memories, incidents and accidents, will be numbered among the things of the past. The march of improvements has decided its fate, but its best days of usefulness are, no doubt, in the future. Its past is but history. Its future is opening a term of progress and great development, fulfilling in part at least the prophecy of the millennial day when every valley shall be exalted and every hill brought low.

#### THE ONEONTA MILITIA.

Oneonta's militia record will require but a short chapter. The first of such record found in the adjutant general's office which comes near our locality is of the date of 1806. At that date Mathew Cully of Milford was made lieutenant colonel in the Sixth regiment, and Alfred Crafts of Otego, now Laurens, was made captain. The two commissions bear date March 19th, 1806.

The commission of John McDonald as captain of an infantry company, which was the first company of militia ever formed in this town, bears date February 29, 1812. Joseph Mumford of Milford was lieutenant colonel. This organization of infantry seems to have been continued. The company roll of 1828 shows Eliakim R. Ford its captain, David Marvin lieutenant and Jacob Newkirk ensign. This roll is under date of September 1st, 1828, and is in Captain E. R. Ford's handwriting. John M. Watkins was first sergeant,

William Smith second sergeant, Leander McDonald third sergeant and Clark W. Baker fourth sergeant. The roll contains forty-one names of officers and privates. The roll of 1831 shows David Marvin as captain and John M. Watkins as ensign. This roll contains fifty-eight names as attending drill September 4th, 1831. John M. Watkins was commissioned captain of the company to date from August 25th, 1832. But the commission was signed by Governor W. L. Marcy and Adjutant-General John A. Dix, the 5th day of January, 1833. The roll of September 3d, 1832, contains eighty-eight names, of which sixty-three were present at drill. Among the list are the names of most of the old citizens of this region. Jacob Morrell and Sylvanus Smith were fifiers. Jacob Hillsinger and Henry Smith were drummers. Among the privates we find the names of John Cutshaw, Levi Tarbox, Abram Blend, Aaron Ford, Joseph and James Fern, Henry Yager, David and Daniel Sullivan, Frederick Bornt, besides many other familiar names and old citizens of this vicinity. Joseph Walling was first sergeant, John D. Yager second, Harvey Carpenter third, and Peter Yager fourth. Solomon Yager was first corporal, Chauncey M. Brewer second, Oliver McDonald third, and David Yager, jr., the fourth. In 1834 John M. Watkins resigned his commission, and was granted an honorable discharge.

This shows sufficiently the standing and position of



the militia of Oneonta at that early date. It also shows that its commanding officers were at the time of receiving their commissions comparatively young men. John McDonald was commissioned captain at the age of 27 years. He was the eldest son of James McDonald, and was a man of fine physique, well educated for the times. Mrs. John M. Watkins and Mrs. Andrew G. Shaw were his daughters. He was born in 1825.

John M. Watkins was born in 1806. He was commissioned captain at the age of 26 years. His residence was in this town from his birth until his death, except the few years which he spent in the Merchants' hotel in Albany. He died April 25th, 1890, in his 84th year.

The Third Separate company was formed August 5th, 1875, with Henry G. Wood as captain. Captain Wood's commission bears date of July 26th, 1875. The general order for the organization of the company was issued August 10th, 1875, Franklin Townsend, adjutant general. At its organization it had 103 members, including officers and privates. Its first officers were men who had earned fame in the great war of the rebellion. Captain Wood was an officer under Generals Custer and Sheridan in the cavalry. He was an able and competent officer, well versed in military tactics, and also in civil affairs as a private citizen. The first lieutenant of the military company was William H. Morris, the second was Nathan Hem-



street. Simply the names of the three first officers of the Third Separate company are alone enough to warrant its success.

To such an extent had this company inspired the public confidence that in 1885, on Thursday, the 18th day of June, the corner stone of a state armory was laid and the work completed that year. The public-spirited people of Oneonta, by private subscription, had the year previous purchased the site for the armory and conveyed it to the state. The result was the erection and sustaining of a state armory and drill room and shooting hall, which are alike an honor to the state and also to the village of Oneonta. The building occupies a prominent position on the eminence on the north side of Fairview street, at a point where it is in fair view of all the travel upon the line of the D. & H. railroad as well as from the public highways approaching the village.

Captain Walter Scott was the second commissioned captain of the Third Separate company. His commission bears the date of September 28th, 1886. Under the command and able management of Captain Scott the company lost none of its prestige or high moral and military standing.

Captain Scott resigned in 1898, when he was commissioned as Major of the First regiment of the State guard. He was succeeded as captain by Ursil A. Ferguson, under whose command the company served dur-

ing the Spanish-American war. Captain Ferguson retained the command until November 22, 1905, when he resigned. During the absence of the Third Separate, now known as Company G, a provisional company was organized, which, after the return of Company G was disbanded. This company was known as the 103d Separate Company, and Douglas W. Miller was commander.

#### THE SITE OF THE BAIRD BLOCK.

Previous to the Revolution, the traditions of the early settlers name the site of the Baird block as the location of an Indian wigwam. The old Indian trail passed just south of it, nearly where the center of Main street now is. Upon this corner and the Stanton block corner and the lands of Chestnut street, between them was a high knoll or ridge with a steep bank upon its south and with its north side flanked by a narrow but almost impassable marsh. The marsh extended from near the old Lindsay house on its west end to some distance above the Stanton block, its northeastern terminus. On the opposite or south side of the trail, at the foot of the bank, commenced quite a large swamp, which extended from the old river at the hill east of the depot, and included all the flat lands now lying south of Main street and north of the mill race. The creek, now known as Silver creek, then wound its meandering course through the swamp, and found its discharge in

the river at the same place and in the same channel as now does the waste water from the mill pond and the flow from the upper Main street sewer.

At what date the original forest was cleared from this lot, tradition tells not. There early stood upon the site an old log house, and the stumps of the former forest had then wholly disappeared. This old house was occupied by the parents of the late David Morrell of Dietz street. He was born in that old log house April 15th, 1806, and there spent the early years of his boyhood life. These facts were related by Mr. Morrell himself.

As the swamp above named occupied all the space between this ridge of land and the river, of course the first road of the white man must have taken the line of the former Indian trail. Such is almost conclusive evidence that this land was cleared and occupied previous to the Revolution, as we know Oneonta had many occupants previous to that war. That the house was old and dilapidated at the time of Mr. Morrell's birth is evidenced by the further fact that it was torn down and others erected on the site previous to 1815. About that date a small frame house was erected on each front or Main street corner of the lot. The one on its southwest corner was afterwards occupied by David Fairchild, the father of Mrs. DeWitt Ford, and the one on the opposite or southwest corner by William Knapp.

The next building erected on the site of the block

was a story and half house built by a firm known as Smith & Couse. Business complications broke up this firm, and the property passed into the possession of William Angell. That building formed the oldest portion of the hotel. It was a very good building for those days. Edmund Meigs, about 1833, purchased the house and lot of Mr. Angell and took immediate possession of it. He also purchased a farm of him which embraced most of the lands in the northwestern part of the third ward of the village. These farm lands were afterwards owned by Enoch Copley and later by Solon Huntington. Mrs. Dr. S. H. Case was a daughter of Mr. Meigs, and her marriage was solemnized in the southwest front room of that house, it then being the front parlor. The ceremony was performed August 20th, 1834. Later another daughter of Mr. Meigs was married in the same room.

After a few years the property passed again into the possession of William Angell and from him to one Elijah King, and later to the possession of Roderick J. and Carlton Emmons. They opened and kept the first hotel upon the premises. This was about the middle of the decade of 1830. They kept it as a public house a year or two, and were followed by a man by the name of Griswold, who also kept a public house. Its next occupant was Elihu Brown. He moved into it about 1837 or 1838. He continued the hotel business until the spring of 1841 when it passed into the hands

of Alfred Potter. Its name had now become the "Otsego House," and the hotel was advertised under that name in the Oneonta Weekly Journal, the first paper published in Oneonta.

In 1841 it started again under the firm name of Fish & Green. James Green was a son-in-law of the late William Richardson. They soon commenced making arrangements for its enlargement, and the following year, 1843, another story was added to its height, it was enlarged, and a piazza added to its Main street front. They soon dissolved and James Green alone for a year or so carried on the business, when he failed and went west.

After this John M. Watkins was its landlord for a year or two, and he was followed by Silas Sullivan. Then about 1850, came N. & S. M. Ballard, who were followed by a Mr. White about 1856. Then came Place & Huntington. They were succeeded in 1865 by Place & Morris. Then came John Tice. Some time during the decade of 1860 the name Otsego House was changed to Susquehanna House. Next it was kept by Ballard & Bowen. They dissolved and were succeeded by S. M. Ballard, who continued for a while and was followed by W. M. Potter. His successor was O. M. Hughston. After Hughston came S. M. Ballard again, after whose death came Stanton & Camp. They dissolved and were succeeded by L. A. Stanton, and it finally closed in 1892 with Marshall & Odekirk.





Dietz Street, north of Walnut, 1870





The number, counting two landlords while run by firms, is 27 in about 57 years. But counting the landlords as single individuals, the number would be nineteen, making an average continuance of about three years each in the business.

#### SUPERVISORS OF ONEONTA.

In 1807-8 James Westcott was supervisor of Otego, of which Oneonta was a part. In 1809-13, Ezra Adams was supervisor. In 1814 John Moore was supervisor. In 1815, John Dietz. In 1816-17, John Moore. In 1818, John Badger. In 1819-24, Peter Collier was supervisor. In 1825-26, Jacob Dietz was supervisor. From 1827 to 1830, inclusive, Peter Collier was supervisor.

In 1830, April 17th, the town of Oneonta was formed, taking therefor a portion of each of the towns of Milford, Otego, Huntsville and Davenport, and the year following it commenced electing its own town officers. The following is a list of supervisors in the order of their election and terms of service:

1830-3, William Richardson; 1834-5, William Angell; 1836-8, Samuel Betts, jr.; 1838-9, William Angell; 1840, Samuel H. Case; 1841, William W. Snow; 1842, Timothy Sabin; 1843, Carleton Emmons; 1844-6, Eliakim R. Ford; 1847, Enos S. Brown; 1848, John M. Watkins; 1849, Carleton Emmons; 1850, Jonathan Brewer; 1851, Luman S. Osborn; 1852-3, Carle-

ton Emmons; 1854, James F. Dean; 1855, David J. Yager; 1856-7, Samuel H. Case; 1858, Harvey Baker; 1859, Silas Sullivan; 1860, Hosea A. Hamilton; 1861, John Cope jr.; 1862-3, Stephen Parish; 1864-72, John Cope jr; 1873-4, William W. Snow; 1875, George Scramling; 1876-7, William H. Morris; 1878, Walter L. Brown; 1879-80, Henry G. Wood; 1881, J. R. L. Walling; 1882-8, Walter L. Brown; 1889, DeForest Wilber; 1890-9, Henry Bull; 1899-03, M. C. Hemstreet; 1903——, Charles Smith.

#### ONEONTA VILLAGE INCORPORATION.

The first incorporation of the village of Oneonta was obtained in 1848. Application was made at the June term of the court of sessions of Otsego county, "in the the matter of the incorporation of Oneonta village, in the town of Oneonta, county of Otsego, in which, upon the petition of Samuel J. Cook, Worthington Wright, Collis P. Huntington, Samuel H. Case and others, on reading and filing a surety, census, notice of application, etc., \* \* \* on the report of Horace Lathrop, James R. Angell, and H. G. Harding, dated August 15th, the county judge, James Hyde" ordered that an election be held and a vote taken for or against such incorporation.

The order named the 14th day of October for such vote, and the hotel of John M. Watkins as the place of holding such election.

Such vote was taken and the certificate of the inspectors of such election, who were John McCrany and E. C. Hodge, shows that "the whole number of votes given at such election was eighty-two, of which the number  
 əpɪ pʊə xɪs-ʔɪxɪs sɛm ʔəʔ, pɹom əpɪ pʊəɹəpɪ ʔɪpɪləvɪ  
 number having thereon the word 'no' was sixteen."

Of all the eighty-two names contained in the above named poll list the following still live in Oneonta village, viz: Andrew G. Shaw, William McCrum, Timothy D. Watkins, and DeWitt Ford.

After a careful examination of the list, I can remember but a single voter within the corporate bounds whose name does not appear on the list. That one name is that of William H. Olin. Why he did not vote I cannot assign any satisfactory reason, for he was the active party in obtaining the incorporation. This certified poll list becomes a part of the official incorporation papers. It was a move of much importance to our people, and my recollection is that nearly every legal voter cast his vote either for or against the measure.

The completed papers of Judge Hyde, the clerk's certificate and the map and bounds of the incorporated tract, containing 657 acres of land, all bear date of October 27th, 1848.

It will thu be seen that the affirmative vote of sixty-six of our citizens decided the question of our incorporation as an incorporated village, which was affirmed by Judge James Hyde at the date above named.

Oneonta's first village election was held December 2d, 1848. The following are the names of the officers elected: for trustees, Eliakim R. Ford, Hezekiah Watkins, William Bronson, William S. Fritts, Samuel J. Cook; assessors, John Cutshaw, Elisha Shepherd, Ephriam C. Hodge; village clerk, William H. Olin; treasurer, Andrew G. Shaw; collector, John McCrany; poundmaster, Solon Huntington; street commissioners, Collis P. Huntington, Harvey Baker, Hosea A. Hamilton.

The poll list of the village election shows that 28 votes were cast, and E. R. Ford was the only candidate who received the entire 28 votes. The town inspectors again acted as inspectors of this first officer election. E. R. Ford was by the trustees made the first president of Oneonta village.

William H. Olin (the late Rev. Dr. Olin), was then a rising young lawyer in Oneonta, and on March 7th, 1849, it was resolved and adopted to levy the sum of fifty-six dollars and five cents upon the taxable property within the incorporation for the purpose of paying Wm. H. Olin the necessary and proper expenses of procuring the incorporation. This resolution was indorsed by E. R. Ford, president.

We had already a fire organization and a small fire engine and C. P. Huntington was foreman of the company. I will relate an incident that occurred about 1845 or 1846. The fire company, under the command

of their foreman, came down to the mill race between the saw and grist mill for practice, as was often the custom. After practicing for some time throwing water in various directions, some one proposed to try the stream on the grist mill window in its westerly gable. I was then half owner of the mill property with Messrs. Collier and Goodyear, and had it under my charge. Mr. Huntington himself had the hose pipe in hand and asked me, "Shall I try it?" "Yes, fire away, I will risk the window," was my prompt reply. No sooner said than done. The sash and glass were shattered in an instant. "Don't throw water in the mill, as I have grain there," was my immediate appeal, but the position was so oblique that scarcely any water entered it. A bin of from 100 to 150 bushels of wheat was nearly under the window but it received no damage. Mr. Huntington offered to pay me for the window, but I assured him it was my risk and not his. The quickness of its destruction was a source of much satisfaction as well as surprise to the fire company. Our townsman, William McCrum, was one of the fire boys who had hold of the engine brake at the time. "How's the grist mill window and the bin of wheat?" was the inquiry I often heard for some weeks after the incident, when I happened to meet one of the boys. Mr. Huntington made a splendid head officer for a fire company.

The second corporation election was held March 7th, 1849. The poll list is not preserved but the inspectors'



list is. Eighty-three votes were cast. Eliakim R. Ford, Hezekiah Watkins, William Bronson, Samuel J. Cook were elected trustees. John Cutshaw, David T. Evans, and Ephriam Hodge were elected assessors. Hosea A. Hamilton and Harvey Baker were elected street commissioners. Solon Huntington, poundmaster, by eighty-three votes.

The third officer election was held March 10th, 1850. E. R. Ford, H. Watkins, James T. Wild, S. H. Case, and E. W. Bennett were elected trustees. W. H. Olin, clerk; John McCrany, collector; Solon Huntington, poundmaster. On the 16th day of September, 1849, the trustees leased of Solon Huntington "a piece of ground for the purpose of being used as a pound lot, and also a passage or driveway thereto for the said village, for the full term of twenty years in consideration of one dollar."

This pound lot was located nearly where the Windsor hotel barns now stand. The lease covers a full page of legal cap, and is signed and sealed by the trustees and Mr. Huntington. At a later date the first village prison or lockup was erected upon this lot. It was a structure of stone.

At the election of 1851, Eliakim R. Ford, Harvey Baker, John T. Wild, Err W. Bennett, and Hezekiah Watkins were elected trustees, D. W. Ford was elected clerk, David J. Yager, treasurer. An especial election was held April 9th, 1851, at which the following reso-

lutions were passed :

*Resolved*, That the sum of fifty dollars be raised by tax in the incorporated village of Oneonta upon the taxable property therein to defray the expenses of building one or more water reservoirs in said village.

*Resolved*, That the sum of thirty-five dollars be raised by tax in the incorporated village of Oneonta upon the taxable property therein to defray the expense of purchasing some engine hose to be used in the extinguishing of fires.

Eighty-five dollars contrasts considerably with the thousands raised now.

At the election March 3d, 1852, Harvey Baker, S. M. Ballard, John McCrany, John M. Watkins, and William Bronson were elected trustees; A. G. Shaw clerk; D. J. Yager, treasurer; E. B. Shove, collector; S. Huntington, poundmaster. A tax of twenty-one dollars and ninety-nine cents was voted for this year.

A map of the village as incorporated in 1848 is preserved. It shows the east bounds of the village as then to be the west bounds of the Joseph Walling farm, now the J. R. L. Walling farm. Its west bounds are the east line of the Andrew Parish farm, now the Scramling farm. Its south bounds are the Susquehanna river. Its north bounds are the Otego patent line. This corporation continued in force until April 20th, 1870.

At that date an act was passed under the title of "An Act to incorporate the village of Oneonta, Otsego coun-

ty, New York," which was passed at the date above named and Oneonta became an incorporated village by legislative enactment.

The following year, March 14th, 1871, an act was passed which extended the bounds of the corporation to their present limits, viz: the westerly line of the Conrad Wolf farm for its westerly bounds and its easterly bounds to the westerly line of the John I. Couse farm. Its north boundary still remaining the Otego patent, and its south the Susquehanna river.

The people of Oneonta, finding the charter of 1870 unsatisfactory, in the fall of 1884 called a public meeting and appointed a committee to prepare a new charter. Harvey Baker was by the meeting appointed chairman of such committee. The committee held many sessions and prepared the present charter with much care.

The village was divided into six wards and a trustee or alderman assigned to each ward and only two of them are annually elected; so that four members of the previous board remain over each year, thus giving a majority of experienced men continually in the board. This new charter was passed by the legislature February 23, 1885, which, with some amendments, is still in force.

## Going Home.

BY EMILY BUGBEE JOHNSON.

Worn with the fretting waves of time,  
I turned my weary, wandering feet,  
To find the paths of girlhood's time,  
And taste once more its friendships sweet.

Strange, strange, to me the thriving town:

The steps of progress had been there,  
Few were the landmarks that I found  
Within its precincts new and fair.

But there my own blue river rolled

Its winding course across the plain,  
And with the lissome grace of old,

The willow fringes still remain.  
And oh, the hills! I could have wept,  
As once again I saw them rise,

White silver mists above them crept,  
And autumn robed them in her dyes.

My heart leaped toward them like a thrill

Of recognition as of yore,  
They seemed to give me greeting still,  
And bid me welcome home once more.

Old comrades were we when the glow  
Of youth's glad time was in the heart.  
What joy and strength I used to know  
In blest communings oft apart.

What sweet companionship I found,  
In hill and river, plain and wood,  
When the horizon girded round  
My world, with all its held of good ;  
Though all things else had passed away,  
And no remembered face to greet,  
As I had wandered day by day  
Along the once familiar street,

Yet I had come unto my own,  
And still had felt my pulses bound  
At every tree and rock and stone,  
And every slope of mossy ground.  
But some true hearts had kept the chain  
Of early friendship pure and bright,  
And after years of joy and pain,  
We caught a gleam of morning light.

Girls of my girlhood were they yet,  
And still the boys of olden days,  
Though Time's relentless hand had set  
His outward seal in many ways.

We lived our youth-time pleasures o'er,  
And wandered by the silver strand,  
Of the fair, flowery isles of yore  
Encircled by the morning land,

We were but few; for many slept,  
And some had wandered far and wide;  
But still the cherished names we kept,  
And memory called them to our side.  
Now musing by the winter fire,  
I see the picture gleaming bright,  
That blessed my spirit's long desire,  
Bathed in the autumn's mellow light.

Fair Oneonta, "place of rest,"  
Set gem-like on the fertile plain,  
By all thy guardian hills caressed,  
Mine eyes may see thee not again;  
Yet, as the shortening years go by,  
My thoughts shall fondly turn to thee,  
When autumn splendors round me lie,  
Or summer skies bend blue and free.





## The Vale of the Susquehanna.

BY EMILY BUGBEE JOHNSON.

I dream of a blue lake sleeping  
Where the eastern hills arise,  
Their dark green summits bathing  
In the light of the sunny skies,

And the gleam of a quiet village  
Nestled among the green,  
And alternate sun and shadow  
Flit over the peaceful scene.

Smooth, emerald lawns are sloping  
Down to the lake's calm side,  
And young, fair forms are floating  
Over the glassy tide.

I seem to hear the echo  
Float over the circling hill,  
Of voices whose gentle music  
Is deep in my memory still.

And out from the lake's calm bosom,  
A river is gliding slow,  
Over whose singing waters  
The willows bend lithe and low.

But swifter rushes the current,  
As further it winds along,  
Over the summer meadows,  
Filled with its own sweet song.

From the hills by the olden homestead  
I've watched it glimmer and sheen  
In the sun of the summer morning,  
And the light of the silver e'en.

And oft with my old companions,  
When life was a rose-hued dream,  
At twilight hour I've wandered  
The banks of the star-lit stream.

O, vale of the blue Susquehanna,  
My love for thee never can fade,  
For hard by the murmuring waters,  
The cherished and lovely are laid.

And down in the heart's hidden chambers,  
A cable of strength is fast,  
Which links the world of the present,  
To the land of the mystical past.

And over the chords electric,  
Swift as the lightning gleam.  
Comes many a voiceless presence  
Borne through the deep unseen.

